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# HISTORY

OF THE

Town and Village

OF

Painted Post,

AND OF THE

TOWN OF ERWIN, N.Y.

BY

CHAS. H. ERWIN

CONTAINING

AN AUTHENTIC RECORD OF ITS TRADITIONS,  
DIVISIONS, IMPORTANT EVENTS, AND STA-  
TISTICS, FROM 1779 to 1874,

AND

SEVERAL BRIEF SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE  
MOST PROMINENT PIONEERS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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At the urgent request of a large number of friends, and the promised assistance of several of our townsmen, who for more than a half century have been not only conversant with, but actual sharers in many of the early and interesting events of this sketch, we have been induced to reproduce and add to our effort of 1860 some few and well authenticated facts, that at that time, if not ignorant of, we had not the time to embrace in it. Then, our writings were for an especial purpose, which appeared in the kind prefatory notice of the publisher, our friend and schoolmate, Dr. GEO. W. PRATT, Editor of the *Corning Journal*.

Our design and endeavors shall be, to produce the most reliable and best authenticated history of the early settlement of the Township and Village of Painted Post, and the Town of Erwin, from facts furnished by the verbal relations of those upon the ground at the time; by the best information to be had from those still living, who have grown up with and indeed, took a part in the varied events of the times; and by the most plausible traditions, reliable documents, private, public, verbal, written or published statements that we can at this late day obtain.



We promise not to draw upon our imagination for conclusions, nor offer our bias for facts, and to give to the readers the evidences we are in possession of, to enable them to rely upon and arrive at the same conclusions. To accomplish this, we shall be compelled to shake up the dust of nearly a whole century, to search into the old private desks, to disturb the old files of papers, deeds, wills and business documents that were carefully laid away in the eighteenth century, and revive in the memories of the aged we hope, many very pleasant associations, though truth may compel a mixture of sadness.

It will not, we know, be an easy task to return to that period in the past. to the time when our whole Country and the world were agitated with the new ideas of civil liberty and self government, with their natural and inevitable consequences, and there, make choice as it were, of a single atom, and then trace accurately its devious and difficult course down through a hundred years so crowded with thronging and constantly increasing events of personal and public interests as the last century.

Our task is rendered more difficult by being again limited in space, but having accepted the conditions as well as the occupation, without further prefatory remark we will commence.



## ANTIQUITY OF PAINTED POST.

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That this name was given to this locality long prior to the settlement, erection or organization, of either the township or the county, there can be little doubt. The name appears to have been a landmark far and well known, within and without the bounds of frontier civilization, and the locality, as a favorite resort of the roving tribes of the Six Nations, which they used for a Council and Game Park until destroyed by the invasion of the white man. We have no tradition or record of an Indian battle being fought upon these grounds, either before or after the appearance of civilization. That it was a favorite haunt of the red man long previous to its settlement by the whites, is surely indicated by the great abundance of Indian relics found scattered in and around our triplet valleys. Stone hatchets, flint arrows and lance points, pottery, mortars and graves abound in great profusion. Many of these mementos of the past and curiosities of the present have been gathered; and it is not an unusual occurrence in excavating cellars or sinking post-holes to find graves, in which are the bones, Indian pottery, arrows and amulets. In 1847 while sinking a post hole on the south west corner of the lot upon which our residence now stands, we exhumed an Indian skeleton and in the same grave found an arrow point, as white as marble, and some pieces of broken pottery; and in 1860



(while writing this article) we were called to attend the unearthing of another Indian skeleton found while excavating the cellars of the Bronson Block, on the S. W. corner of Hamilton and Water Streets. This grave contained the bones of a very large person, the thigh and arm bones being of unusual length; it was buried in a sitting posture as was indicated by the skull, vertebra and rib bones being massed, while the bones of the legs were extended and regularly placed; the broken, but well preserved pieces of Indian pottery and arrow points, showing that he had been amply provided with ammunition and cooking utensils for the long journey to the happy hunting grounds. These indications alone, are (we think) sufficient evidence that for ages before, this was a well known and favorite location of the numerous tribes of native Americans, throughout the whole country; but we shall be able to present other and, perhaps, more conclusive proofs, from quotations of legal documents, deeds of purchase and titles of the Pultney and Hornby estates.

#### THE NAME--PAINTED POST.

The origin of this name, is found in a curious fact, heretofore unknown as a custom of the Indians, the erection of a monument to the memory of the 'brave Seneca Chief Montour, a half-breed, and son of the distinguished Queen Catherine, of Wyoming celebrity. He died in the year 1779 from wounds received at the battle of Freeling's Fort, on the West branch of the Susquehanna river, and was buried under an elm at Painted Post.' This account of the name, death and grave, of Capt. Montour, we get from Mr Taggart, a young man, who was at the time a prisoner under the notorious Tory, Captain McDonald, and was present at the burial. We get a similar account from Col. Harper, but he does not mention the name. (History of Steuben, Note, p. 51.) There appears to be a





difference of opinion regarding the place where Montour was wounded. Some authorities say it was at the battle of the Hogback just below and near Newtown, (now City of Elmira) but none exist as to the place of his death and burial, as the following account by the late Capt. Samuel Adams, who received it by interpreter from the mouth of the venerable and renowned Seneca Chief, Cornplanter, in 1833, substantially proves. Capt. Adams said, "At the urgent request of Capt. Samuel Erwin, to call upon this chief and get if possible, a correct version of the facts regarding the post found here; and while lying by for repairs in Cornplanter's eddy on the Allegany river, being near his habitation, I found his interpreter Benjamin Marsh, Jr. and with him called upon the distinguished chief. I had not a little difficulty in approaching him, as he assumed the dignity and bearing of an unconquered sovereign, which in truth he was; his peace and good will having been purchased only with an annuity and reservation from the Government.

But through the address and kindness of Mr. Marsh, who introduced me as a person of distinguished influence, who had come from a great distance to get from him some reliable information concerning the exact location and the origin of the name Painted Post, he condescendingly, but gracefully, motioned me to a seat upon one of the three stools, which with a rude deer skin lounge and an old table, constituted the entire furniture of the reception, and I believe, only room of his palace. I noticed his yet keen black eyes sparkle, his nostril expand, and the faintest possible smile pass like a flash over his usually sad but stern features at the mention of Painted Post, but as suddenly vanished all signs of the momentary excitement, recalled doubtless, by the mention of the name that revived some pleasant or savage memory of the past. Being seated, without a moment's hesitation he related briefly through his interpreter, that a great chief and brave was there taken sick, died and was buried under



the shade of an elm, on the north side and near the mouth of Conhocton\* river,' (at the same time mapping it out on the ground floor and marking with his knife the place of the grave,) and that he (Cornplanter) was one of the council that placed over the grave a post, stained with the juice of the wild strawberry, to mark the spot.'

No inducement that I could offer would make him divulge the name or tribe of this great chief, but on other topics he was not so reticent. He informed me in his style of computation (moons and winters) that he was at that time more than 106 years old, and of many other things calculated to impress me with a due sense of his dignity and importance. He was exceedingly formal, but Mr. Marsh informed me that in the presence of strangers he never for a moment relaxed from that cold and stern dignity, and that in fact, he had not in his knowledge any intimate friendship." From this report of Capt. Adams, some of the most prominent and peculiar Indian characteristics are very conspicuous: brevity, decision and reticence. Undoubtedly Cornplanter did not consider it politic or consistent with the dignity of a great chief to acknowledge wounds, or reveal the name of a chief or brave that received them in the losing battles of the Six Nations with frontier civilization.

For our purpose, it matters but little what reasons induced Cornplanter's silence regarding the name, and we cordially give to his memory, thanks for the facts in his brief statement, that so distinctly and indubitably points to the same grave and the identical post, and locates them beyond civil or controversy on the site of the village. But we have another and a more positive witness, Mr. Little, a young man from Northumberland, Pa., who was with Gen. Sullivan in the battles of the Hogback and other battles of the Chemung,† was taken prisoner, and with Taggart, was taken by McDonald to Canada. He made his es-

\*Sagittarion, "Limb to the water."

†Sagittarion, "Big Horn."



cape, and on his return stopped a few days with Benjamin Patterson. He informed him, "that Captain Montour was wounded at the Hogback, was taken up the river in a canoe to Painted Post, where he died and was buried. That it was freely spoken of in the camp in Canada before his escape." From an attentive perusal of Stone's life of Brant, and other Indian history, from the dates and other circumstances connected with Sullivan's campaign, and the well known fact that Queen Catherine had sons fighting the borderers, we find corroboration of Taggart's, Little's and Complanter's statements.

Col. Harper was with Sullivan, but does not say positively who it was. Complanter and Taggart were the only two known that claim to have been present at the burial; Taggart and Little are the only ones who are positive of the name, and Taggart is the only one who says Montour was wounded on the Sasquehanna. There cannot exist a doubt, if the above is correct, that the Chief Montour died, was buried, and that a post was erected over his grave, and that the stained post found here by the first settlers was the same. Edmund C. Cooper, a resident of our village, Robert Patterson of our town, Mr. Samuel Cook, of Campbell, and others still living who have seen it, have within the present month (September 1860) pointed out to us the original spot. Capt Samuel Erwin, Francis Erwin and others, while living have each reportedly shown us the place, and all mark the identical place, described by Complanter's knife in his map upon the ground floor of his palace, and that is within a few feet and in front of the N. E. corner of Messrs. Stout & Hurd's wagon shop erected last spring. Can there remain a reasonable doubt that the origin of the name we prize so highly, is found in a memento to the prowess of martyred patriotism?



## DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE.

We quote from a report of the Attorney General of our State. "On the 16th of December, in the year 1786 the western part of this state including what is now the county of Steuben, was in possession of the native Indians."

## FIRST SETTLEMENT.

The first settlement and habitation of civilized man in the county, was made by William Harris, a Pennsylvanian, in 1786, and was situated very near the north end of the Conhocton bridge in the village.

While he was in Pennsylvania on a visit, near Christmas, in 1787, his house was burned. Mr. Harris was an Indian trader. (See History of Steuben, pp. 29 to 32 and 51.)

## THE FIRST PURCHASE.

"On the first day of April 1788 Messrs. Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham purchased the pre-emption right of the State of Massachusetts, and on the 8th day of July of the same year, they purchased the right of soil of the Five Nations of Indians to the lands comprising the counties of Steuben, Yates, Ontario, part of Genesee and Livingston, and about half of Allegany" (see documents relating to the titles of Pulteney and Hornby estates, pp. 16, 22, 23 and 24, also History of Steuben, p. 51.\*)

These gentlemen took immediate possession, and had it surveyed into townships and the towns into sections. Gen. Porter of Niagara (we believe) was one of the surveyors. Early in the summer of 1789 and while the surveyors were yet at work in this vicinity, Col. Arthur Erwin a gentleman from Erwina, Bucks county, Pa., came to Painted Post with a drove of cattle

\*There is an error in the dates of the pre-emption and right of soil purchase in Judge McMaster's History. The facts were discovered since he wrote it.





which he was driving to Canandarque\* (now Canandaigua.) While resting his cattle here, he employed an Indian guide, mounted his pony and rode up the mountain, on the north of the village, from whence he obtained a view of the triplet valleys of Chemung, Conhocton and Tioga. Being impressed with the grandeur of the scene from his elevated position, he with the guide came back, crossed the Conhocton, followed a trail up through the beautiful valley of the Tioga, forded the Canisteo and from the summit of the mountain on the south side of that river, obtained another view of the grand landscape these valleys presented at that time; carpeted as they were with the rich and variegated foliage of the dense and luxuriant forests that covered them and waved like an emerald sea of pristine nature, bounded by majestic mountains of a deeper and darker green. They are beautiful still, but how much more magnificent and grand in their primeval silence and freshness they must have appeared before the ax and civilization invaded their solitude. The Col. was a gentleman of culture, and could appreciate their great beauty as well as their intrinsic value.

After enjoying for a short time this incomparable landscape, with his guide he returned to the log shanty of the surveyors, and started his men with the cattle on the trail towards Canandaigua, overtaking them some eight or ten miles west of Painted Post. Leaving directions with his drovers, to follow with the cattle, he with his guide hurried on to Canandaigua, where he arrived about the middle of July, late in the afternoon.

Immediately on his arrival, he found the office of Messrs. Phelps and Gorham, enquired if the land was for sale and made them an offer for the land which is now the town of Erwin, and they were to take in payment his drove of cattle at their own

\*Judge Dow's statement is erroneous in date, as also the purpose for which Col. Erwin was driving the cattle. He had no sons at Painted Post until 1792. (See History of Steuben, p. 186.)



price and the remainder to be paid in gold. The next morning the offer and conditions were accepted by Messrs. Phelps & Gorham. Within twenty-four hours after the deed was signed, Judge Eleazar Lindley arrived and made an offer for the land. Subsequently he purchased the town of Lindley.

#### THE FIRST RECORD OF THE NAME PAINTED POST

that we have been able to discover, may be found in the deed given by Oliver Phelps to Col. Arthur Erwin. For the benefit of our readers, and to show the contrast between an ancient and modern legal conveyance, we will quote the deed (of which there is an authenticated copy of the original, in possession of C. F. Platt Esq. of this village) :

*"TO ALL PEOPLE* to whom these presents shall come,  
*"Greeting : KNOW YE,* that I, Oliver Phelps, now of  
 "Canandaque, County of Ontario, and State of New York,  
 "Esq'r. For and in consideration of the sum of Fourteen hun-  
 "dred pounds lawful money of the State of New York to me in  
 "hand paid before the encsaling hereof by Arthur Arwin of  
 "Bucks County, State of Pennsylvania, the receipt whereof I do  
 "hereby acknowledge and am fully satisfied, contented and paid.  
 "*Hace* given granted bargained sold aliened released conveyed  
 "and confirmed and by these Presents do freely clearly and abso-  
 "lutely give grant bargain sell alien release convey and confirm  
 "unto him the said Arthur Arwin his Heirs and Assigns forever  
 "the certain piece or parcel of land lying in the County of Onta-  
 "rio in the said State of New York being Township Number  
 "Two in the second range of Towns being six miles North of  
 "Pennsylvania Line and six miles West of the Massachusetts  
 "Pre-emption being six miles square containing twenty-three  
 "thousand and forty acres known by the name of Painted Post.  
 "*To have and to hold* the before granted premises with the ap-  
 "purtenances and privileges thereunto belonging to him the said



"Arthur Arwin his Heirs and Assigns to him and his own proper use, benefit and Behoof forever more, And I the said Oliver Phelps do bind myself my heirs and Executors and Administrators do covenant promise and Grant unto and with the said Arthur Arwin, his Heirs and Assigns forever that before and until the ensealing hereof I am the true sole proper and lawful owner and possessor of the before granted premises with the appurtenances and have in myself good right full power and lawful authority to give grant bargain sell alien release convey and confirm the same as aforesaid and that free and clear and freely and clearly executed acquitted and discharged of and from all former and other gifts grants and bargain sales leases Mortgages Wills Entails Jointures Dowries thirds Executions and Incumbrances whatever. *And furthermore* I the said Oliver Phelps for myself my Heirs Executors and Administrators do hereby covenant promise and engage the before granted premises with the appurtenances unto him the said Arthur Arwin his Heirs and Assigns forever to warrant secure and defend against the lawful claims and demands of any person or persons whatsoever. *In Witness whereof* I have hereunto set my hand and seal this eighteenth day of July one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine.

OLIVER PHELPS, [l. s.]

Signed sealed and delivered in presence of

Amos Hall, }  
John Corr. }

"This Deed and Deed of confirmation from Nathaniel Gorham were recorded at Albany February 9th 1792. By request of Joseph Erwin."

In September 1790, Col. Arthur Erwin, Solomon Bennett, Joel Thomas and Uriah Stephens purchased the towns of Hornbushville and Canistota, which are described in the Deed, "as lands lying in the district of Erwin and known by the name of Old Canistota Castle."





## COL. ARTHUR ERWIN.

This gentleman came from near the city of Antrim, Ireland, before the Revolution : (the exact year we are unable to give at this time,) and settled at Erwina, Bucks Co., Pa., nearly opposite Frenchtown, New Jersey. He was a gentleman of culture and affluence, of shrewd business habits and of untiring energy and promptness ; of a dignified and commanding appearance, and with a pleasing and courtly address, genial and gentle in manner, benevolent and kind in disposition.

He was the proprietor of a large landed estate extending some eight or nine miles along the west bank of the Delaware river. During the Revolution he held a commission and served with some distinction in the American army. Soon after the close of the war, he made a purchase of nearly 5000 acres of land in the Chemung valley near Tioga point, (now Athens) and subsequently, in the years 1789 and 1790, made the purchase of the town of Erwin and parts of the towns of Hornellsville and Canisteo. He was twice married and raised a family of ten children ; among whom his sons, Capt. Samuel, Francis and Maj. Arthur bore a conspicuous part in the early settlement of this town and county. In the early summer of 1792 he visited his possessions in this vicinity accompanied by his sons Capt. Samuel and Francis, who were to remain and superintend his business in this town, and vicinity.

On his return, he stopped at the house of Daniel McDuffe, one of his tenants, near Tioga Point, and as he sat in the evening listening to McDuffe's music, (who, it is said, was a fine violinist,) suddenly arose from his seat and staggering towards the open door said, "I am shot," and then fell. He lived but a few hours. Suspicion immediately attached to an ejected squatter by the name of Thomas, who the same night stole a horse (or as was strongly suspected at the time, he had been supplied with





one) and was never after heard from. Judge Avery of Owego, in his address before the Pioneer Association at Athens in 1854, in alluding to this sad but dastardly murder said: "About that time there was some difficulty regarding the State's line, or of the Pennsylvania and Connecticut charterists. The squatters claiming that these lands were within the State of New York or came within the Connecticut chart, threatened to shoot the first person who should purchase or settle upon them; they claiming title by occupation.

Col. Erwin was the first and only victim of these assassins, and that the prompt investigation of this murder either frightened them away, or forced the cowardly villains into lawful obedience." The late Judge Avery was a gentleman of more than ordinary legal attainments, and though his statements were entirely new to us, we are not inclined with our limited knowledge, to contradict them. They do not conflict with the facts.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE TOWN.

The town was organized in 1793\* and named Painted Post, at that time comprising the territory embraced in the six townships of Hornby, Campbell, Erwin, Lindley, Corning and Caton. Eli Mend one of the first settlers, was the first Supervisor. He went on foot, by Indian trails through the vast wilderness, nearly 70 miles to Canandaigua, to meet the Board. At that time there were no roads and scarce a habitation on his route, which compelled him to take his hotel and bar in a knapsack upon his back in the daytime, and use them for a pillow at night, under the protecting roof of the dense foliage of the trees near his path. We cannot resist this opportunity of contrasting Mr. Mend's honors at that time, with the modern disinterested political

\*Judge McMaster in his history of Steuben dates the organization of the town and county in 1790. It is an error. There would have been no necessity for our supervisor to go to Canandaigua to meet the Board if Steuben had been organized the same year.



ambitions of the present day, that furnish our towns annually with an army of aspirants for any town office, and who would accept for the honors—*minus* the fees, rather than not have them. How often would our towns be represented in the county legislature if its members were compelled to walk to Bath to meet the board? How many would enlist in the brigade of Candidate Generals?

That portion of the original township of Painted Post, No. 2 of the second range, now the town of Corning, was purchased of Messrs. Phelps & Gorham in 1790 by Frederick Calkins, from Vermont, Justice Wolcott from Eastern New York, Ephraim Patterson from Connecticut, Silas Wood, Caleb Gardner and Peleg Gorton. (History of Steuben.)

#### ORGANIZATION OF STEUBEN COUNTY.

In the year 1796 the south eastern portion of Ontario was made into a new County and named in honor of Baron Steuben, a distinguished foreigner and brave officer of the Revolutionary army. Painted Post was one of the six townships of the new county, and at the time, embraced an area of territory twelve miles north and south by eighteen miles east and west, nearly equal to one sixth of the entire State of Rhode Island.

#### THE FIRST CLEARING

in the town, or county of Steuben, was made by Frederick Calkins, a Vermont farmer, who came to the town late in the summer of 1789, without his family, concluding to make a settlement, but ignorant of the survey and lines, commenced a "chopping" on the flats near the present Erie railroad bridge in the village, and had "felled" several acres of the thrifty forest before discovering that he was at work on the land of Col. Arthur Erwin. He immediately abandoned the enterprise on learning the facts, and the next spring became one of the proprietors of the town of Corning, locating on the farm now occupied by that village: build-



ing the first habitation on its site. His son James was the first white male child born in the town.

Ephraim Patterson and Ichabod, his son, David Fuller and some few others with their families settled in the town in the autumn of 1789. Eli and Eldad Mead in 1790; Capt. Samuel Erwin and Francis his brother, Thomas McBurney, George Goodhue, David and Johnathan Cook, Capt. Howell Bull and several others in 1792; John Knox, Benj. Eaton, Henry McCormick, Hezekiah Thurber and others in 1793.

#### THE FIRST HOTEL

was built of round logs, one and a half stories, and containing two rooms, called the Painted Post Hotel or Tavern, early in the spring of 1790, and was located near the north end of the Conhocton bridge. It was built by David Fuller, who was an agent and tenant of Col. Erwin and for a long time the popular landlord of the hotel.

#### THE FIRST PREACHER.

We quote from a New York State Gazetteer, published in Syracuse in 1860 by R. P. Smith. "The first religious services were conducted by John Warren in 1793."\*

#### THE FIRST GRIST MILL

in town was built near Ephraim Patterson's house on Post Creek, a few rods north of the highway bridge crossing the creek at the head of Chimney Narrows, in 1794. Like all the buildings that had yet been erected in town, this was constructed of round logs, and the machinery was much in the crude style of the house. It could only crush or chop the grain which required to be bolted through a hand seive, by those who were

\*We do not vouch for it, but if this is correct, it is about the only fact we have been able to discover in this Gazetteer in regard to the town.



so fortunate as to possess, or could borrow, such a convenience. May we not attribute the discovery or invention of the present fashionable and healthy diet, "brown or graham bread" to the necessities of our early settlers? The ruins of this ancient mill, unless very recently destroyed, still remain, a dumb show of the enterprise of our early settlers.

In a conversation with the late Samuel Cook, of Campbell, Aug 9th 1860, he made the following interesting and corroborative statements:

"In the summer of 1792, I came with my father and family to Painted Post. Our goods from Tioga Point were pushed in a canoe up the Chemung and Conhocton rivers by my father, and our cattle, sheep and hogs were driven along the banks by my mother and sister and the children. In the Chemung Narrows we were met by a large party of Indians who were going to Tioga Point to make a treaty. At first, my mother was very much frightened, but the Indians were very civil and passed us with their friendly salutation of "sachoo," how do you do, or "sachoo ee-cho," how are you my friend. We met with no other unusual incident until we reached and landed at a log tavern situated on the north shore of the Conhocton river, near the end of the bridge built there that spring. This tavern was kept by David Fuller with whom my father and family boarded some days, or until he found a log shanty situated near the Post Creek road into which he moved. I was then thirteen, and now I am eighty-one years old. Ephraim Patterson was then living in a house on the west bank of Post Creek just above the Chimney Narrows. Leabed his son was living in another, situated upon the farm now remembered as Nehemiah Hubbell's (father of Hon. Wm. S. Hubbell, of Bath, and Philo P. Hubbell, of Wisconsin, Minn.) and Frederick Calkins was then living on the south







side of the Chemung river, nearly opposite the Chimney Narrows. We lived in this shanty a little more than a year, then moved up to Mr. Lindley's, who was just commencing a new settlement, and built a log house near where Col. Morgan now lives. In 1793 or 1794 there was a log grist mill built on Post Creek just above Patterson's house. In 1795 Benjamin Eaton opened

#### THE FIRST STORE

in the town, if not in the county, for the benefit of civilization. It was situated upon the ground now used for the highway, at the head of the street leading from Knoxville to the Corning bridge. A man by the name of Comstock, from the mouth of the Goodhue Creek, up the Canisteo, and myself, then nearly sixteen years old, started in a canoe for Wattle's Ferry, (now Unadilla,) after his first stock of goods. We floated down the Chemung river to Tioga point, then poled up the Susquehanna to Wattle's Ferry, drawing our boat upon the shore at night and sleeping under the trees upon the banks. We reached our destination in five days, where we found Mr. Eaton, who had gone by land. The stock of goods was too large for our canoe, though it was a very large one, which compelled Mr. Eaton to purchase another small one for which he paid one gallon of whisky. We loaded the canoes and he took charge of the small one, and we started down the river on our return. The water was low and the boats heavily laden and we were frequently compelled to unload and "tote" the bundles past the rapids. Without serious accident but with severe toil we arrived safely at home with the first stock of merchandise."

Twice, we went to Mud Creek, in 1860, to find Mr. John Wolcott, who had been a clerk for Mr. Eaton to learn, more of the particulars regarding the early mercantile business in our town, and of many other interesting details of those early times



of which he was familiar, but at both times we found him absent from home. Mr. Wolcott and Mr. Cook were the only two persons then living (1860) in this vicinity, who came to Painted Post in that early day, and we regret very much that we could not have seen him then. Both have since started on that long journey, never to return.

They, with that little band of Pioneers that then constituted the civilization of Painted Post, their predecessors on the soil, the wild, roving red men, their cotemporaries of the woods, the more savage panther, wolf and bear, have all passed away,—gone. There is not a person left to narrate the toils and deprivations they shared and suffered upon these grounds more than eighty years ago. How difficult it is for us, in 1874, to comprehend or appreciate the truth, that the bruised muscle, courageous energy, indomitable will and perseverance of those times, are the levers that have lifted us into comparative ease and affluence.

In another conversation with Mr. Cook, he described a violent hurricane or tornado that swept over the southern part of this town, in 1794,\* and did much damage to the widely scattered settlers. His father was then living in Lindley, and he was a lad of about 16 years. At the time, his father and mother had gone on foot and by Indian trail over the hills, some nine or ten miles, to visit a neighbor living at or near Addison, and left him in charge of the house and three younger children of the family. He said:

"We were all out doors playing, when my attention was attracted by a sudden and sullen rumbling moan of the winds, an oppression and wierd-like quietness of the forest trees over us and the peculiar shadows that seemed to envelope everything

\*Judge McMaster in his mention of this tornado, erroneously dates it in 1791. Mr. Cook did not move into *this* town until 1792, and did not move to Lindley until late in 1793, nor did Judge Baker, (we think) then reside in Pleasant Valley.



around us; a strangeness appeared to have fallen on everything about us, the sounds came from a great distance and from every point of the compass, and yet neither from the earth, the air, nor from underground. A vague sense of fear, but of what or for what reasons I know not, took possession of the children and myself, possessed us all, and bound us in oppressive silence; and thus it continued several moments. At last, turning my eyes westward or towards Addison, I saw the leaves and limbs flying, and heard more distinctly the terrible roar of the winds mingled with the crash of the falling forest. I was very much frightened, and expected we should all be killed, for there were many huge forest trees around and near our house. I had a painful feeling or inclination to do something, but I knew not what.

"Suddenly occurred to me the recollection of a hole under the house that had been made by throwing up the dirt to start the chimney, and of hearing father speak of it, as a good place to put his potatoes. As rapid as the thought, I hurried the frightened children into the house, raised one of the log planks of the floor, put them down into it and getting in myself managed to pull the log back into place. We had no time to spare. In this dark hole we remained very quietly, if not contentedly, nearly two hours.

"When we came out, the storm had passed, but had left its desolating path strewn with destruction. The kings of the forest, uprooted and broken, were lying scattered around in all directions. A large maple over two and a half feet in diameter had fallen within a few feet of the house."

The settlements and improvements up to this time were scattered and there were but few wagon roads, and those few in the poorest condition.



The luxuries of the settlers were the wild game which abounded in the unbroken forests and the products of the clear and rapid streams. Elk, panther, bear and deer, squirrel, partridge, pigeon, wild duck and other game were found in the forest: and fish, particularly the king of the finny tribe,—the speckled brook trout, and many more and better varieties than can now get over the dams in the rivers, were then found in the greatest abundance in the rivers and creeks. But those who desired white bread or any other article of food that required flour of either wheat, rye or buckwheat, were forced to paddle the canoe to and from Tioga Point, a distance of more than eighty miles to and from the nearest grist mill. Corn-bread and Johnny cake were then, the "staff of life,"—the mills were the pestle and mortar, and the motive powers were often the muscles of the right arms, the patience and energies of our mothers and grand-mothers.

Flour then, was the exception, and nearly as rare and difficult to be found as now a stomach not afflicted with some form of dyspepsia. Wheat and grain soon became abundant upon these fertile soils, but the time to get it to the distant mills could not always be spared. How many young ladies of twenty years, can now be found within the territory embraced in the old township of Painted Post, who have either from necessity, or could voluntarily manufacture the meal and make a loaf of corn bread or a Johnny cake? Or how many of the young gentlemen of 20, who have worked by the month for eight dollars, and from daylight to dark, or who would walk eight or ten miles to assist a neighbor to raise a house, or to help him secure his crops?

And yet, such were the accomplishments and occupations of our mothers and fathers in the early days of the settlement of our pleasant homes.







True, we cannot urge the necessities now, and are happy in the knowledge that none exists, but we cannot resist as it were, the comparison of the two periods, which, to some of our readers, may appear rude. Such, however, was not our intention, but to make the contrast so broad that none, from the modern habits of indifference, not to say selfishness, could fail to appreciate the deprivations, honest toil, and genuine friendships of the pioneers.

Hospitality, generosity and frankness; honest toil, energy, and perseverance, are characteristics of pioneer life; hypocrisy, indolence, pomposity, and assurance, nor exquisite refinement seldom thrive in a new settlement, however close they may follow. The valleys and hills, at that time, were covered with dense groves of white, norway, yellow, and pitch pine, spruce and hemlock, with magnificent forests of hickory, ash, oak, maple, beach, birch, chestnut, cherry, walnut, butternut, elm, and many other varieties of hard and soft woods, which at this late day afford the most brilliant, beautiful and variegated autumnal tints. Slowly, but surely, the vampires of improvement and cultivation have mutilated and destroyed the primeval forests—the red man and wild beasts have been crowded off,—the woodman's ax, the plow and the harrow, the spade and the hoe, have been busy in converting the wilderness into a garden of enterprise and thrift, worthy of being the habitation of the white man.

Families came in, and the lights from the log cabins, the choppings and the clearings, admonished the natives, whether human or beasts, that if they were disposed to live peaceably with the new comers, well and good; but, if on the contrary, it was time and would be well for them to abscond. And from the most authentic accounts of that period, we are informed that the society of the new settlers was not congenial, and grad-



ually, as civilization utilized and cleared up, they as gradually cleared out.

The southern portion of the town of Painted Post, now known as Lindley, was settled in 1793\* by Col. Eleazur Lindley, of New Jersey, with a colony of 40 families.

The population of Steuben County in the year 1790 is given as 168.† This, it will be observed, was six years before its organization, or the known settlement in any township but Painted Post, in the county, and when Col. Erwin purchased, in July 1789, there were not, perhaps, a dozen white persons, including the surveyors, in the county.

After 1791 the settlements increased more rapidly, and to give an idea of the growth and production of farms, and prosperity of farmers of that time, we quote a few statistics found among the old papers left by and in the hand writing of Capt. Samuel Erwin. It is dated 1795:

"In the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety two, John Redfield says he raised upon our property seventy-five (75) bushels of wheat,—the one half of the wheat was our share, and also 55 bushels of buckwheat, and some corn. The corn was damaged. He made use of some of our share of this grain:—37½ bushels wheat, at 5s, £9, 7s, 6d, &c."

This would indicate but a few acres, perhaps in the whole improvement less than ten acres; but considering the facts, that there was but two years between the product and purchase, it makes a good exhibit. Those of our readers who have had experience in clearing lands covered with dense groves of large

\*History of Steuben, p. 50, an error of date. By authority of Samuel Cook, and personal investigations, we have changed the date from 1790 to 1793.

†An error in the History of Steuben, p. 250. At the time there was no such county, and the very first settlement was only made a little more than one year before. There had been no purchase of any town but Painted Post until the spring of 1790.



and thrifty timber, can appreciate the toils and risks and the little time Mr. Redfield had in the accomplishment. Scarce one without experience, would ever think, unless referred to them, of the innumerable annoyances, chopping, logging, burning, grubbing stumps and roots, and the thousand other troubles to be encountered, the hard labor, patience and energy necessary to such results, nor in the absence of such reflections, or a knowledge of the hardships, comprehend the satisfaction, encouragement and stimulus it gave to the hard-toiling farmers of those days. It was their only compensation, their reward for industry.

#### THE FIRST FRAME HOUSE IN PAINTED POST.

That was erected in the town, was built by Benjamin Patterson in 1797, situated on the site of the old Jennings' tavern in Knoxville, and was long used as a public house.

#### BENJAMIN PATTERSON

was born in Loudon county, State of Virginia, in the year 1759. His mother was a cousin of Daniel Boone, of Kentucky. He moved with his family from Northumberland, Pa., boating his household goods up the Susquehanna and Chemung rivers to Painted Post in 1797, and kept tavern for six years in the house he built in Knoxville. He was the Nimrod not only of Stenben, but northern Pennsylvania and western New York, one of the most renowned hunters and practical woodsmen of the age. During the Revolution war he served in a rifle corps organized for the defense of the frontier, and in this perilous service met with many adventures.

It was upon the Susquehanna frontiers that his hunting tastes were formed and developed, and in the gratification of this propensity that he acquired, perhaps, a better knowledge of the geography of the entire region of country before mentioned,



than any one person that has since lived upon it. He became eminent as the best guide between Northumberland and Lake Erie. Physically, he was of medium height, squarely built, powerful and agile. He was a man of keen observation, of intelligence, judgment, and withal of strict integrity; of remarkable powers of memory and narration. His retentive memory and graphic narrations of back woods life, and descriptions of wild wood scenery, were such that the old and the young, men of learning as well as the rough men of the border, alike delighted in, and he would hold them for hours spell-bound."

We regret that our space will not permit us more than this brief sketch, nor to publish some of the many anecdotes of him that are still as familiar as household words. He raised a large family. Two of his sons are still living intown, Robert Patterson and John McC. Patterson.

#### THE FIRST STILL.

In 1798, Benjamin Patterson erected the first still, upon the farm known as the "Aunt Sharp farm," (now owned and occupied by John Vischer). Mr. Patterson used to sell large quantities of whisky to the Indians in exchange for skins and furs, which he would put in a canoe with several barrels of whisky and take to Northumberland, where he had a commission-merchant who would send the furs to Philadelphia, and exchange his whisky for other liquors such as brandy, rum, gin and wine, and powder, lead and flints, with which his bar was as well supplied as with liquors. He used to get his corn and rye chopped at the Post Creek mill, and at Bartlet's mill, in Bradford. This still was subsequently converted into

#### THE FIRST TANNERY

in the county, by George Sharp who purchased the farm. Many years thereafter the tannery was abandoned, and a more





extensive still was put in its place by the late Erastus Dodge, of Corning.

#### PURCHASE OF CAMPBELL.

The south western portion of Painted Post, or No. 3 of the first range, now the town of Campbell was purchased in 1800 by Robert, Solomon and Archibald Campbell, and Joseph Stevens, (grand-father of Benjamin and Jonas Stevens now living in that town, Marcus and John Stevens now living in Detroit, and Ralph, Amos, Joseph and Almond Stevens living in other parts of the State of Michigan). Of the proprietors we are unable to give a reliable account, not having a personal knowledge, nor any one near to enquire of and receive authentic data. We can only say that each one bore a conspicuous part in the early settlement of the town and county, and were highly respected. Frequent mention is made of them in speaking of the events of that early period.

In 1801 John E. Evans came to Painted Post, and boarded with Benjamin Patterson. Afterwards, purchased a farm in this town, about a mile and a half south of the village, and built a house, (the farm is now owned by C. F. Platt, of this village). Mr. Evans, from the part he acted in town, requires more than mere mention of his name, and we have been kindly furnished with the following brief but authentic biographical sketch of

#### JOHN E. EVANS.

He was born near the city of London, England, and arrived at Philadelphia in 1800. Came to Northumberland, Pa., and remained nearly a year with Dr. Friesly, an English gentleman with whom he was acquainted, in the old country. In 1801 he moved to and settled in the town of Painted Post. Mr. Evans, before he left his native country, had received a liberal education, and was likewise endowed with a shrewd business tact, that in



the early settlement of this new county, made him one of the leading men of this part of Steuben. He taught the first school in the town, and many of his pupils at that time are yet living, among whom are Robert and John Patterson and Gen. F. E. Erwin, residents of the town, Gen. Wm. D. Knox of Junction City, Kansas; John Erwin, Esq., of Cleveland, Ohio; and Col. F. B. Young, of Hornellsville; and among those well remembered when living, Thomas Wheat, Arthur H. Erwin, John McBurney, Samuel Shannon, Philander Knox, and many more whose names do not occur to us at this time. He was, during the war of 1812, Collector of Revenue, afterwards Postmaster, and held many important and useful positions of trust.

Was the first clerk of the town of Erwin, and was re-elected six times. Was a Justice of the Peace, &c., and in all his public positions maintained an enviable distinction, as an honest and efficient public officer, and withal was somewhat peculiar, if not eccentric, always retaining his English characteristics. He died February 27th, 1854, leaving his second wife, and three children. He was about 70 years of age.

After the death of Col. Arthur Erwin his property was by allotment divided equally between his ten children, who at the time were all living. Capt. Samuel, Francis, Maj. Arthur, Mrs. Rebecca McKean and Mrs. Mulhollon, became settlers upon their portions in this town. The other brothers and sisters, excepting Mrs. Dr. John Cooper, subsequently disposed of their property in this vicinity, in a large part to the brothers and sisters who had settled here. "Capt. Sam," and "Uncle Frank," as they were usually called, came into possession of that portion upon which the village now stands, and Maj. Arthur of the extreme south western portion of the town. It required some time to make this settlement, as Col. Erwin left no will. At all events, we have no knowledge of any. The following biogra-



phical sketch has been handed us, (which we have taken the liberty to cartail).

#### CAPTAIN SAMUEL ERWIN.

"He was born on the 4th day of May, 1770, at Erwina, Bucks Co., Pa. His early education, like that of so many of his contemporaries of those early times, consisted only of the rudiments of the English branches then taught in the "select schools." Early in the summer of 1792 he accompanied his father to Painted Post, and remained in charge of his father's large possessions in this vicinity until 1795 or 1796. January 10th, 1799, he was commissioned, by President JOHN ADAMS, 1st Lieutenant in the 11th Regiment of U. S. Infantry; his commission expiring with the President's term of office.

He was again commissioned 1st Lieutenant of the 2nd Regiment U. S. Infantry, February 16th, 1802, by President THOMAS JEFFERSON. These commissions are still in the possession of his youngest son, Charles H. Erwin, of this village. He was subsequently promoted to the rank of Captain, and the commission is in possession of some one of his children. He was married in 1801, to Miss Rachel Heckman, of Easton, Northumberland Co., Pa. In the summer of 1803 he removed with his family from Easton to Painted Post, to take personal charge of his possessions, where he resided until his death, on the 10th day of November, 1836, maintaining throughout his long life a character of the highest respectability and of sterling integrity. Physically he was the ideal settler and pioneer. His towering height, nearly 6½ feet, and his erect and powerful frame, gave him a commanding appearance, at once dignified and imposing, and suggesting unrivaled strength. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say, that in physical vigor and endurance he had no equal in the county, if in western New York.



He was characterised by the courtly grace and suavity of the old school gentleman; naturally kind, the model of probity, he easily won the esteem and attachment, not only of his household, but of all that were associated with him in the social or business relations of the settlement of this portion of the State. His genial and social qualities have left the most grateful recollections among those who knew him in the intimacies of friendship.

The arduous life of a pioneer, with its serious responsibilities and comparative privations, by no means repressed the warm vein of humor that lent a kindly glow to the current of his life, but marked as this might have been, it was never exercised at the expense of the feelings of any, whoever or whatever they might be. His courtesy and respect for others invariably led him to the profoundest deference toward all.

In his business relations, he never relaxed from the choicest principles of justice and honesty, was frank and manly in transactions, and equally severe, trenchant and caustic, when spurred to indignation by the indolence or dishonesty of others. Devoted to his friends, prudent and sagacious as a counselor, he swayed, naturally and justly, an extensive influence. He was not inclined to political aspirations, but decided in his own views and political opinions, yet tolerant to those who differed with him. His keen insight into human nature, which he read with unerring accuracy, made him the terror of sharpers and evil-doers, by whom alone he was cordially disliked.

Among all his good traits however, none appear in a finer light, or will live longer as a mark of his noble manhood, than his unvaried attentions and solicitude toward the sick and distressed, to whose welfare he gave himself with unflagging zeal and tenderness.







Many who are now living still retain, though long years have elapsed, a grateful memory for the man who in their afflictions lent them the assistance of a genial and sympathetic nature."

In these early days this region was more devoted to agricultural pursuits, than to the manufacture of the lumber which abounded in such great profusion, and which at a later period, and for so long a time, made it distinguished as a lumber district. The saw mills were very few, and the clearings forced a destruction of a large quantity of the best timber; and doubtless, more valuable lumber, of a far superior quality than can be found standing on the whole area of the original township to-day, was in these valleys alone split into fence rails or chopped into fire wood.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, there had not been any facilities found for marketing, and hence no inducement for manufacturing lumber. About this time, 1798 or 1800, it was discovered that our streams were navigable, at certain seasons of the year, or at time of freshets, to tide water, and that the marketable products of the soil and labor of the settlers could be conveyed by rafts and in arks to the Chesapeake Bay, or to the large villages and cities on the Susquehanna river, that were accessible by turnpikes and post roads to the then best markets of the country, the cities of Philadelphia and Baltimore.

DeWitt Clinton's active brain had not then conceived that great public beneficiary, the canal system; nor had Fulton's wisdom and ingenuity shone even on the coast and inland navigable waters; and as for the person who should have ventured to dream of the "steam locomotion wheels,"—locomotive and rail—it might have been better for him to have dined a witch under the blue laws of Connecticut, than to have related his dream to the common sense farmer of Steuben.



In 1798 Frederick Bartles had manufactured at his saw mill in Bartles' hollow, (now Bradford), 100,000 feet of pine boards and plank, and rafted and run them down Mud Creek into the Conhocton, and down that river and the Chemung and Susquehanna to Harrisburg, or perhaps below. In 1800 two ark-loads of wheat were taken down the river from Mud Creek, and two or three more from other points the same year. "One ark was built upon the Tioga." (History of Steuben p. 182). This accomplishment was thought worthy of a place in the county records, and may there be found in Vol. 1. of Record of Deeds in the Clerk's office, and is termed as a "useful invention," signed by the Clerk "Henry A. Townsend, Clerk of Steuben."

#### THE FIRST FRAME HOUSE IN ERWIN

was built by Benjamin Patterson in 1803, upon the site of the late residence of John McC. Patterson of our village. It was occupied by him until his death, in 1830.

In the early spring of 1803 Capt. Samuel Erwin removed with his family to Painted Post, from Easton, Pa. His furniture and goods were carted to Wilksbarre, the metropolis of the far-famed Wyoming valley, on Susquehanna River, and from there shipped on a Durham boat, and brought up the rivers to Painted Post. Capt. Erwin, wife and daughter, the latter then about 15 months old (Mrs. Eliza E. Townsend, now living with her son Edward E. Townsend, at the "Pines," four miles south of the village), came the entire distance on horseback, he carrying the child on a pillow in front of him. This is perhaps the longest equestrian feat made by a white lady of her age, then on record; nearly 300 miles. After a short delay at the house of David Fuller, they moved into their new residence, a log house, situated a few rods east and south of the old log barn still standing upon the farm now owned and occupied by Gen. Francis E. Erwin, about a mile and a half west of the village. They lived



in that house until about the year 1811, when they moved into the log tavern formerly occupied by David Fuller, where they remained until late in 1823.\*

By this time there had been made in various parts of the town many new settlements. George Young, (father of Col. Francis E. Young, late of this village, and Clement H. Young, of Corning); Edmund C. Cooper, (father of Levi C. Cooper, of this village); and many others, settled in the town about this time.

Mr. Young, then a single man, was from Philadelphia, and his business was to make, repair, and if possible to refine, the coarse habits of the settlers.

From certain old papers in our possession, it appears that Mr. Jas. Irwin, (father-in-law of Judge Rochester,) was engaged in the merchantile business at Painted Post in 1804 and 1805.

#### THE OLD PAINTED POST LODGE OF F. AND A. MASONS.

We are unable to give the exact time of the instituting of this lodge, the archives having been destroyed by fire at Corning, some 16 years since, and we cannot learn of a charter member living at this time. We give the most reliable information that we can obtain, which is from the oldest daughter of one of the charter members, Mrs. John Sly, and corroborated by the testimony of one of the members of that lodge, Benjamin Farwell, both residents of the village, the daughter and son-in-law of the late Hon. John Knox.

\* That celebrated hotel,—that same old log house, had the honor of being the birthplace of your humble servant,—the writer. Who as an evidence of the justice of his claim of Irish decent, remarks: that though we were born in it, lived nearly two years in it, and was not blind, never saw it—that we recollect, having moved at that time into the new house just finished, with his father and family. In fact, would not have mentioned it, were it not for the fact that we desired to show that we had a little interest in the early settlement of the old town. We crave our readers pardon for this little egotism.



The lodge was instituted 1805 or 1806, in a room of Nehemiah Hubbell's house, and soon after moved into an upper and more commodious one, in Judge Knox's residence, which was long used as a hotel. It was composed of the best men within a circle of many miles; in fact, such were the only ones who could gain admittance, as there existed then a rigid adherence to all the rules of discipline. The order flourished, and occupied that room until the Morgan excitement, about 1827. There are many anecdotes connected with this lodge, one of which we will relate, having often heard it, and being well acquainted with all concerned.

Judge Knox's wife was a lady who could enjoy a joke, and play one admirably too. One bitter cold night a certain person from Hornby made his appearance in the kitchen, where she and her colored servant Nellie were engaged in their household duties, claiming the hospitalities and heat of the old-fashioned fire place, (the fire in the sitting room having refused to afford comfort, and the Judge too much engaged in the lodge, making preparations to attend to it). Madam, who instantly divined the business of the Hornby candidate, concluded to test his moral courage, and in a measure prepare him for the difficulties he was about to encounter so blindly. Without apparently any notice of the Hornby gentleman's presence, she asked Nellie to bring out the large gridiron and long poker, saying in a solemn, soliloquizing tone, somewhat mixed with petulance: "Those pesky masons are more bother than they are worth. Some poor fellow is to be branded again to night. Put them on the coals Nellie, and have them red hot by the time they want them. It wont do to spoil a month's amusement for the brothers by saving some *booby* from a burn that will last longer than their laugh."







Nellie obeyed orders. The irons slowly became heated; and Madam ordered her to make haste. He sat looking on, and so intently that the perspiration started from every pore. Suddenly he blurted out a rapid good night, and thanks for the privilege of warming; buttoned his thread-bare surtout, and bolted out of the room; and the last that was seen of him that evening was his plunging through the frosty snow drifts, in the direction of Hornby. Is it necessary to add that he never "joined the Masons?" or that the brothers sat up late, watching, and are still waiting for their Hornby candidate?

We have been furnished with another biographical sketch of one of the pioneers, the only objection to which is its conspicuous brevity.

#### HON. JOHN KNOX.

"He was born in Massachusetts, May 1st, 1770, and came to Painted Post in—— He was married in January, 1795, to Miss Hannah Douglas, (a relative of the late Stephen A. Douglas, of Ill.), and raised a family, among whom are Mrs. John Sly and Mrs. Benjamin Farwell, both now living in this village, and Gen. Wm. Douglas Knox, living in Junction City, Kansas. Mr. Knox was a gentleman of acknowledged ability, and maintained a useful and distinguished life in the town, county and State. He was elected a member of the Assembly in 1809, re-elected in 1810, and voted for the first appropriation for surveying the Erie Canal in 1811. In 1821 he was a member of the State Convention for the revision of the constitution. He built and occupied a residence, in which, for many years, he kept public house, and in which the Masonic Order had rooms until 1827. This house was located on the north side of the main street in the village of Knoxville, nearly opposite the street now leading to the Corning bridge. He was the founder of and his name was given to the village. He was



a kind and indulgent parent, an upright and honorable man, and an estimable citizen. His death occurred at Campbell, where he then resided, on the eleventh day of April, 1856."

In 1806 Capt. Samuel Erwin and his brother Francis Erwin were engaged in the merchantile business, and continued selling goods until 1811, and from some old papers we find that Maj. Arthur Erwin (their brother) was their clerk.

From the same source we learn that Capt. Erwin, or some of his tenantry, had about this time built a still, but we cannot find from the papers, or otherwise ascertain, the exact year. It stood originally upon a lot then known as the Hornknocker farm, near the mouth of what is now called the General's Hollow.

In 1811 this still was moved into a long, one story log building standing upon the lot now occupied by and immediately in front of the Painted Post Iron Works. After the business for which it had been built was abandoned, it was used for a residence by Peter Mickle, Gen. Abner Trowbridge, Henry Vanderhoff and perhaps others. Our first recollection of it is as the residence of George Broug and Vanderhoff, and afterwards, school-master Clark and James Casterline, or "Uncle Jimmy," as he is more frequently called. Mr. James S. Rose, his son-in-law, was married in this building. It was taken down in 1848, and a Foundry built upon the site.

Pioneer or frontier life, whether in all cases justly, is nevertheless, invariably associated with intemperance, and doubtless many of the early settlers of this town and Steuben county, were not exempt from this prevalent and ruinous indulgence. The necessity or use of whisky as a beverage in any country, but more particularly in this when it was new, cannot (we think) be vindicated by a common sense argument or good excuse. The only mitigation, if in truth it may be any, for those times, is the fact that then all liquors were comparatively harmless



beside the drugged poisons that are now vended under the title of "pure liquors." Then corn and rye were so abundantly and easily produced, that prices would not pay transportation. Now diminution of crops, ground rent, increased wages, indolence, deception, avarice, fraud, villainy and—death are mixed with the most subtle poisons, noxious drugs and filth, sacrificing quality to quantities and honesty to gain.

But in this land abounding in the most excellent, cool, clear, pure and healthful spring water there could not have been a plausible excuse for the indulgence even of that "pure old whisky," that was never known to produce *mania potu*;—a technicality that we never heard of until we had lived more than a quarter of a century. In those times, either the early settlers used a less quantity, or the quality must have been vastly superior to the whisky of to-day, or the interval between the first drink and madness has become alarmingly short. Youths not out of their "teens," have been known within the last decade, to have reached a lower depth of the horrors of drunkenness than we can recollect the most intemperate pioneer to have fallen.

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The thinness of the scattered population in this county, at the commencement of this century, did not prevent the frequent meetings of the neighbors, and these, whether by accident or appointment, were not unfrequently occasions of jollification, and always a substitute for the more modern newspaper, in the exchange of incidents and opinions, in the usual gossip of the neighborhood, or passing and perpetrating jokes on one another. True they were not always tempered with moderation nor always couched in the most delicate language, and as rarely mixed with animosity or slander. But for the better comprehension of our readers, and to repel aspersions upon the character of some of the early settlers, we will quote one who





speaks in the terse style and impressive language of the times:

"We were poor and rough, but honest. We *fit* and *drinked* some to be sure, but no more than everybody did in those days. The man that says we were liars and drunkards, is a liar himself and tell him so for me will you?" (See History of Sturben, p. 165).

In the above quotation is the best vindication that can be given for the bad habit of drinking, and not a very good one at that.

In 1812 the settlements had grown to a size that required them to assist in adjusting the National difficulties with England. A day was appointed for determining by draft,\* who should have the honor of defending our rights and privileges from the Tories, and for the second time convince King George that he had no rights in this country, nor upon the ocean, that the honest, free and hard toiling settlers were under obligation to respect. The draft was made in Bath and several living at Painted Post were chosen; among them Abner Trowbridge,† Edmund C. Cooper, James Gillen, Thomas Wheat, and several more whose names we could not obtain. Joseph Gillett, then

\* There was a second draft, and those who had been so fortunate as to draw prizes in the last, had started for the war but were recalled before they reached the border. The only one we can name of this 2nd draft was George Young, (father of Col. F. E. Young). Peace had been declared previous to the draft, but then the lightning had not been enslaved by man.

†Through carelessness perhaps, Mr. Trowbridge was put down as a deserter. The facts are however, it was a great injustice. A truer patriot never went to war, and he was defrauded out of a justly deserved pension. The circumstances were: Lieut. Joseph Gillett was wounded in Canada and compelled to come home. He detached from his company Mr. Trowbridge to accompany him, and neglected to have it put properly upon record, and before Mr. T. could return, peace was declared, and Lieut. G. never attended to the matter and before it was found to be necessary, died. We are pleased at an opportunity to gratify any friend of his with this late but truthful vindication of his patriotism.





living on the Little Flatts, below Corning, was a Lieutenant in this Regiment, and was wounded. Judge Thomas McBurney also held a commission. Edmund C. Cooper procured a substitute. Daniel Mulhollen, now a resident of Jasper, enlisted twice before the draft: the first time his father obtained a release contrary to Daniel's wishes, but the second time he succeeded in getting into the fight, and returning just before the close of the war, neglected to bring with him his left hand, which from a wound received in one of the battles in Canada, compelled amputation.

From a New York Gazetteer printed in 1813, we clip a few extracts descriptive of the town of Painted Post:

"Painted Post, a large Post township in the S. E. corner of Steuben County, 20 miles on a right line S. E. of Bath village, 234 miles a little S. of W. from Albany. \* \* \* It comprises 6 townships, No. 1, 2 and 3 in the first and second range of Phelps & Gorham's purchase. \* \* \* In this town are two other Post offices than that of Painted Post: Lindley town P. O. in the S. W. part; and Campbell town P. O. on the Conhocton, in the N. W. part of the town. This extent of area embraces a diversity of soil and surface too variant for general description. It is well watered by streams for navigation and mills. The Tioga river holds a devious course through three of the townships receiving the Canisteo and Conhocton creeks from the west and north-west. \* \* \* The 3 western townships are usually known by the names of their respective proprietors. Lindley town on the S. is No. 1 in the 2d range; Erwin Town in the centre, is No. 2 in the 2d range, and Campbell Town on the N. is No. 3 in the second range. In Erwin Town is a



bridge\* of 300 feet, across the mouth of the Conhocton creek, and here stands the *painted post*, that gave name to the town. It is said to have been an Indian monument of some celebrated war chief. \* \* \* The lands are of a good general character; with many tracts of extensive and rich alluvion. There are 6 or 7 saw mills, 4 or 5 grist mills, a carding machine and felling mill. The school houses may be six in number and these serve also for occasional meetings of worship. Along the rivers and principal creeks are roads and some turnpikes. \* \* \* No. 2 in the second range, contains the village of Painted Post and has the Tioga river running E. across the centre, the village is on the N. side of the river. \* \* \* The population of Painted Post is 954 and there are 71 Senatorial electors."

We have never known a Gazetteer, containing a more correct or as accurate description of a town. The more modern style has been to crowd the history of events, the geological and geographical description, agricultural, manufactural, and other statistics together in one sentence, rendering unintelligible and unreliable the whole.

In the foregoing extracts, there are one or two non-essential errors; a little exaggeration of the number of mills and school houses, and the course of the Tioga river through our town, which is nearly N. E., and the *serious blunder* of designating streams 40 miles in length requiring "a bridge 300 feet across," as creeks.

\* The present bridge, is not as long, though it occupies nearly the same place. The first bridge we recollect seeing was at least one hundred and fifty feet longer than the one now over the river, and was supported upon log abutments nearly as far as the lane upon the south side, and reaching nearly as far over the flats as over the river. It was not a frame bridge, if our memory is correct but the sleepers or stringers, lashed from pier to pier with two pieces in the river. Maj. Arthur Everett rode a horse over this old bridge on the strangers, on a night so dark that he could not see that the planks had been removed.



About 1804 or 1805, Ansel McCall built a grist and saw mill on the site of the late Hammond & Johnson mills, on the south side of the river below the canal dam. Mr. McCall was the father of the late Mrs. Betsy Calkins, the late Mrs. Wm. S. Hubbell, of Bath, the late Mrs. F. E. Erwin, Mrs. T. W. Whiting of Iowa, and Ansel J. McCall, Esq., now living at Bath with his mother, the 2nd wife.

Mr. McC. moved into the town in 1804, and settled in a log house near his mill. There were a large number of the pioneers of our town, men who were very much respected, men distinguished for various deeds of prowess and feats of physical and intellectual strength, and of every one of which, some thrilling incident or some pleasant or interesting anecdote might be related, but of whom we have been unable to get *promised* data. We had intended to have given more than mere names; and we regret, as will the reader, that such names as Judge Lindley, Judge Thos. McBurney, Francis and Maj. Arthur Erwin, Nehemiah Hubbell (the greatest jester of those early times), Hezekiah Thurber, Judge Steel, Frederick and John W. Scott, Peleg Gorton, George, John and Robert Sly, Robert Jennings, Archibald and Robert Campbell, Joseph Stevens, Rev. David Harrower, Benjamin Harrower, John Cooper, Jr., R. T. Bonham, John McBurney, Dr. R. H. Hoyt, Capt. Samuel Adams, Abijah Ward, Jonathan Baker, Wygants, Borsts, Goodrich, Robt. Patterson, alias "Old Daddy Koon," (whose old violin is still in existence and owned by Capt. Samuel Erwin, now of Texas), and a host of others, one or the other of whose names are invariably used in speaking of the settlement of our town, and who are entitled to more than a mere mention, have not a personal sketch. These omissions in their proper places, make our task more difficult, but that which annoys us most, is the failure to collect the reliable facts, many of which were promised us. Several



times while arriving at these dates, we have been admonished, that "mere rumors" and narrations of the hundredth person plural, cannot be relied upon as unbiased facts.

We have learned also, that by "the oft repeated story" of thrilling incidents and personal exploits of the pioneers, much of prejudice, of aspersion and injury to some of the early settlers owes its origin, and we cannot consent to make this little book a vehicle to ensure or perpetuate the parasitical exaggerations that have clustered around the memories of the past, and which have grown to such enormity in some instances, that if brought face to face with the actors, they could not recognize them. We have been surprised somewhat, at the wonderful supply of traditions, incidents, personal exploits, hair-breadth escapes, and accidents from "hear say," that have been gratuitously offered us for this sketch, some of which, were from those whose forefathers emigrated to this country within the last decade. However, we are grateful for the least, and for all favors and assistance.

#### FIRST SETTLEMENT OF HORNBY.

That portion of Painted Post, known as Hornby was first settled by Uriah Nash, in 1814. Edward Stubbs, Ezra Shaw, Capt. Samuel Adams and Jesse Underwood settled in Hornby in 1815, and Chester Knowlton and James S. Gardner in 1816. (See History of Steuben p. 198). The late Andrew B. Dickinson\* was at a later day a resident of Hornby, and was perhaps

\* Mr. Dickinson represented this Senatorial District for four years, and for many years was a leading and influential politician. At the same time he was one of the most extensive farmers and stockgrowers in his part of the State. Under Mr. Lincoln he was appointed minister to Nicaragua, where he displayed so much diplomatic ability that the Government to which he was accredited, made particular request and offered pecuniary inducements to have him returned. He finally consented and settled in that country, purchasing a sugar plantation and living upon it until his death, which occurred in the city of Leon, Nicaragua, April 21st, 1873.







the most remarkable and distinguished person that has ever lived in that town.

We have been unable to learn the date or the name of the first settler in Caton, the only remaining town that belonged to the original township of Painted Post. We have been informed that it was a hunter by the name of Ames, better known as "crazy Ames."

The year 1816 was said to have been the coldest ever experienced in this vicinity, and is recollected as "the year without a summer." It is still used as a point from which to date the memory of events past and future.

In the autumn of 1817 our town was visited with the greatest flood then known in these valleys, and it is still spoken of as the "great pumpkin flood." At this time, few if any of the settlements reached far beyond the river flats, and the waters overflowed the banks and swept nearly all the late produce off. The pumpkins, which upon the rich soil had grown in great abundance and to a large size, were very conspicuous, covering the face of the deep—and swift current. We give Samuel Cook's account of this flood.

"My father was then living in a log house, just above and on the opposite side of the Tioga river from Erwin Centre. We had on the second floor, which was made of split and hewn logs, some corn in the ear. The flood had driven two families to our house, and my father brought the sheep to the house in a canoe, and we shoveled the corn back, raised the floor and put the sheep in the second story.

The water came on the first and then we all went up into the second story, where we remained until morning,—three families, 11 sheep and the corn, with scarce room enough for either alone. In the morning the waters threatened to cover the second floor, and my father took the families and the sheep out of the



window into the canoe and to the hillside, which was near by. During the day five stacks of wheat and oats floated off and went out of sight down the river, two of which were afterwards recovered, (every sheaf I believe), having floated over two miles they were found landed right side up, upon the head of Mulhollon's Island, opposite Edward E. Townsend's farm. It was to the settlers in these valleys the most disheartening event that had yet occurred, coming at that season and before the crops were all gathered. Nearly every settler in the valleys of the Tioga, Canisteo and Conhocton was victimized, and the destruction of property was only exceeded by the disappointment and suffering of the hard-toiling settlers.

In 1822 Francis Erwin had erected a two story frame hotel 70x50 feet at a cost of \$2,000; Mr. Timothy Goodrich, architect. This was the first frame upon the site of the present village, and remained for a half a century, lacking a few months, and was burned the 29th of April, 1872. We have the original contract, in the hand writing of John E. Evans, and on the same sheet a draught of the front and rear, east and west elevations, with a plan of the ground, second and "garret" floors by Mr. Goodrich. It was purchased in 1847 by Willis J. Savory, who raised it one story. It was always used for the purpose it had been built. Capt. Samuel Bessley, (father of the wife of the architect, Mr. Goodrich; of Mrs. George Haverling, of Bath, and of Mrs. Col. Uri Balcom, of Chicago), first and for many years occupied it, and gained a widely known reputation as one of the best of landlords. It was situated on the N. E. corner of Water and Hamilton streets. The same year Capt. Samuel Erwin had erected the first frame store, upon the N. W. corner, opposite the hotel, which was rented to the late Mr. John Arnot, of Elmira. The late Hon. Wm. S. Hubbell, of Bath, was his clerk. The next year, 1823, he had erected the house



we now own, where we reside, and where now, (December 1873), we are writing this article, and in which there has never been a change in the form of a room since it was first finished. Capt. Erwin occupied it until his death. It is now the oldest frame building, excepting the old grist mill, in town. The same year he had built the old grist mill and saw mill, now owned and occupied by Warren S. Hodgman, and his brother L. D. Hodgman, of Bath. John Spicer was the builder and millwright. There were four run of stone and a half-gang bolt put in the mill.

We still have many of the old receipted bills for the materials, also the shipping bills. When these buildings were raised the "*neighbors*" from Tioga Point, Newtown, Big Flats, Lawrenceville, Lindley, Penn Yan, Bath and intermediate places, were here to assist. The occasion was the last *gala day* for the old and first hotel of the town, and where all received their victuals and drink.

In those days the neighbors from these distances would come cheerfully to raisings and "logging bees," and half that distance to "huskings," for the fun and frolic. Only fifty years ago. But then humanity and friendship did not appear the ungenerous, dignified selfishness of to-day. The early settlers of that time, though clothed in the coarse home-spun garb, accustomed to the rough habits and uncouth manners of necessity, had underneath all those external disadvantages, the disposition that prompts to self-sacrifice, genuine friendships, kindness of heart, and the tender sympathies of real gentility. They were jewels in the rough, unflawed by modern polish; containing underneath the coarse enamel the intrinsic worth and priceless gems,—honor, love, and truth. Solid nuggets of unalloyed gold, not beaten into fashion's fantastic and fanciful shapes, nor polished into glittering and gaudy show. "The man 's a man for a' that."





In those times, men were not prized by the acre, nor for their *sterling* quantities, but by their manhood, and for their genuine good qualities.

The original "painted post" found here, and which gave to our village and town their name, had rotted off before 1811, and though preserved for many years thereafter, became at last mutilated beyond recognizance, and finally was lost.

In 1824, Mr. John Wygant cut the sheet iron Indian which has ever since graced the village, perched upon a painted post. This effort, taking into consideration the times and their facilities, was quite a success; and when looked at as in commemoration and perpetuation of the original "monumental post," we can the more readily overlook all the imperfections, and better appreciate, guard and honor it as a memento.

#### FIRST DIVISION OF THE TOWN.

In 1826 the original township was divided into three towns: Painted Post, Erwin and Hornby. Painted Post comprising Nos. 1 in the first and second range. Erwin, comprising Nos. 2 in the first and second range, and Hornby, comprising Nos. 3 in the first and second range: or, Painted Post and Caton forming Painted Post. Erwin and Lindley forming Erwin; Hornby and Campbell forming Hornby.

Erwin was named in honor of its first proprietor, and Hornby in honor of one of the proprietors of the Pulteney and Hornby estates of whom it was purchased. The town of Erwin was organized and held its first election on the 7th day of March, 1826, at the house of Daniel Rooks, Jr., upon the site of the Erwin House, now occupied by William Edminster, a little more than four miles south of this village. Ethan Pier, Esq. was the presiding officer. Capt. Samuel Erwin was elected the first supervisor, and re-elected in 1827,





1828 and 1829. Abner Thurber, of Lindley, for the next three years; John Cooper Jr., for one year; Chauncey Hoffman, for two years; Albert C. Morgan, for one year, and Gen. F. E. Erwin, for 1837. During this year the town of Erwin was again divided, and Lindley taken from the southern portion, became No. 2 of the first range; and Erwin No. 2 of the second range in the survey of Messrs. Phelps and Gorham.

In 1838, Gen. F. E. Erwin was elected Supervisor of this town, substantially as it exists to day. Arthur Erwin Jr., for the next four years; Wm. J. Gilbert, for the next six years; Arthur Erwin Jr., for the next two years; L. P. Bennett for one year; Col. Uri Balcom for two years; Capt. Samuel Erwin, (now residing in Texas) for one year; and Arthur H. Erwin for the next eight years, or until 1863; Wm. J. Gilbert for 1863. (Mr. Gilbert's death occurred before his term expired, and the town board appointed A. J. Fox to fill the vacancy.) Wm. C. Bronson for 1864, 1865, 1866 and 1867; A. J. Fox for 1868; Wm. C. Bronson for 1869; Lyman Balcom for 1870; Ira P. Bennett for 1871; and Maj. Charles J. Fox for 1872 and 1873. John E. Evans was elected the first Town Clerk, and re-elected for the next 6 years, and several times thereafter.

T. W. Whiting and William Boardman, (the first married now living in Iowa, and the latter now a Presbyterian minister residing in Boston, Mass.,) in 1829 commenced the merchantile business in the store first occupied by John Arnot. The same year Arthur H. Erwin built a store upon the ground first occupied by the first Painted Post Hotel, where he sold goods until 1835.

The fame of this vicinity as a lumber district and the quality and quantity at that time, was such as to awaken an interest and create a demand for it in Albany and New York; but how to get it there was the problem. Our settlers were as anxious to sell as the people north and east were to purchase, perhaps a



little more so, for the southern markets of Philadelphia, Baltimore and Willmington were not always reliable, well knowing that our products must, for the want of another outlet, come to them.

The Erie canal had now been completed, and would make a cheaper transportation, decrease the risks on the rivers, and present a competition for our products. But again, the expense of transportation over the hills to the head of Seneca Lake would absorb more than the benefits.

About the year 1829 the project of overcoming these difficulties by building the Chemung canal was agitated. The Chemung canal was surveyed, and designed to terminate at Elmira. It was then discovered that water could not be taken from the Chemung river at Elmira to fill the high level of the proposed canal, which at that place was from 8 to 12 feet above the level of the water in the river. This obvious difficulty necessitated the Chemung canal feeder; nor was this all; the feeder would have to be taken up the river so far as to have the water in the river higher than the summit level of the proposed canal, and this last difficulty could not be obviated without endangering the terminus at Elmira.

The State appointed three Commissioners to locate the feeder, and right here, *in this location*, let the reader observe was a great injustice done, not only to the people of these valleys, but to the entire commonwealth of the State.

Wm. W. Maxwell, of Elmira, Wm. C. Bouck, afterwards Governor, (the third one we are unable to name), and the Chief Engineer, Mr. Hutchison, in the summer of 1830, (we think), made an official visit to Painted Post to locate the feeder. (There are those still living in the village who saw them on that occasion.) These gentlemen, accompanied by Capt. Samuel and Francis Erwin and several other gentlemen, walked down



to the mouth of the Conhocton and the junction with the Tioga river, examined, investigated, and consulted the feasibilities, with all the objections that could be urged, of locating the dam at the foot of the Conhocton Island and the feeder in a natural hollow a few rods above the dam to be erected. Returning to the Hotel; after discussing the dinner and all the pros and cons, the officials determined and *pledged* the gentlemen present, that the dam should be located at the foot of Conhocton Island, and the feeder in the natural hollow above it; and that this was the opinion of the Commissioners, even after their arrival in Albany, we have the word of the late Judge Washington Barnes, the late Wm. M. Maxwell, and others. These facts are, or should be, sufficient to allay the prejudices obtained through the maliciousness of some and the ignorance or thoughtlessness of others, or of any who have, or persist in, the theory "that the principal land holders here did not want the canal to come to this village, discouraged the project, or drove them away." Beside the facts, that in the opinion of the best and most sagacious business men, before the location, that the place mentioned was not only the best, but that nature had purposely intended it for a canal; that it would benefit the public as well as the land owners to locate it here; we have the verbal testimony of one of the commissioners, W. W. Maxwell, and the chief engineer, Mr. Hutchison, who have repeatedly given the following explanations, and to responsible and respectable gentlemen, some of whom still reside in this vicinity.

We have more than once heard Mr. Maxwell say: "That before the officials left Painted Post they had pledged Capt. Erwin and others, that the dam should be built at the foot of the Island; but on their return to Elmira a more critical examination was made of Post Creek, which, in the mind of one of the party, seemed to suggest a change; but that until they had arrived in





Albany there had been no change in the majority of the commission." Mr. Hutchison's version explains the "suggestion of a change" spoken of by Mr. Maxwell. He says:

"On leaving Painted Post, and on their arrival at Albany, the location of the dam was to have been at the lower end of the Island, but the whole thing was changed by the promise of contract to certain parties for the use of the surplus waters of the canal at the summit, which would be near Horseheads, and which were supposed to be of greater value if the dam was located on its present site: but instead of being benefited, as it was supposed would be the case, the project was ruined by the location. That he was opposed to the change of location, and was one of the persons interested in the surplus water contract, and *knew this to be the reason of the change.*"

In the opinion of all honorable and just men, this must forever silence the aspersions upon the intelligence and sagacity of the gentleman who owned the land at that time, and fully exonerate any and all individuals then living in or near Painted Post from the stigma of throwing away the benefits to be derived from the location of the canal dam near our village. To doubt these facts, would be equivalent to an impeachment of the integrity of gentlemen, some of whom were and others who are well known to be among the most reliable, intelligent and sagacious residents of old Steuben; gentlemen who if now living, as well as those that are, would and do, receive nought but flattery and fawning from the sycophants who now traduce them.

About this time, or between 1830 and 1832, the estate of Wm. Erwin, (brother of Capt. Samuel Erwin), in this town, was purchased by Isaac Grey and two lawyers from Owego, N. Y., Messrs. Platt and Dana. It embraced an area of some 4,000





acres of land, bountifully supplied with groves of superior and valuable pine timber. They built the first saw mill upon the site of what is now known as the "Gang Mills," and after a few years sold the property to Sylvester Smith, Abram Ogden and Col. Hiram W. Bostwick. A few years later Judge Smith became sole proprietor, and for some ten or twelve years manufactured lumber and improved the lands, and then sold out to Messrs. John C. Cameron, and James D. Weston, two gentlemen who were credited with a long experience, and a practical knowledge of the lumber business. However, these gentlemen did not long retain possession. (We shall not probably have a better opportunity, and will here outline the history of this "institution" to the present time.)

In 1846 Rev. Norman Fox, (father of A. J. Fox, one of the present proprietors, Col. Wm. F. Fox of Oil City, and Maj. Charles J. Fox, of our town), Abijah Weston and Wm. C. Bronson, purchased of Messrs. Cameron and Weston this property. This enterprising firm immediately rebuilt and enlarged the mill, adding gangs, slabbers, edgers, lath and other improved machinery, and as the increasing demands required, adding steam to their hydraulic power, new buildings with planing, shingle and picket machines, until it has become the most extensive lumber establishment and firm in town, county or State, and the nucleus of perhaps the most extensive lumbering business in the United States, when aggregating the various results of the different manufactories, over the widely-spread locations in which one or the other of these gentlemen (all of whom reside in this town) are the principal owners.

They have in possession, title in fee simple to many hundreds of thousands acres of the best timber lands in the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, and timber-rights, licences, or Government leases, for more than a million and a



quarter acres of the very best timber tracts of Canada. They own and run seven extensive gang mills, that average each from ten to thirty million feet of lumber annually, and four large planing mills, with each a capacity of from 50,000 to 250,000 feet of dressed lumber per day, together with the immense and unknown quantities of shingles, lath and pickets manufactured by them, and the number of their employees is counted by thousands.

This acorn of industry, enterprise and success has its root in this town, but its foliage of benefit spreads over a large part of the continent, and justly deserves more than the page or two we have been enabled to devote to it, but to this we are limited. There are perhaps more than four hundred inhabitants in the hamlet or village at the Gang Mills, nearly all of them employees and their families.\*

In 1831 the town of Campbell was taken from Hornby; Hornby becoming No. 3 of the first range, and Campbell No. 3 of the second range of the Phelps & Gorham survey. Caton was taken from the town of Painted Post in 1840; Caton becoming No. 1 of the first range, and Painted Post No. 2 of the first range of the Phelps & Gorham survey. In 1853 the old name of Painted Post was changed to that of Corniug.

Early in 1833 Capt. Samuel Erwin first laid out the village plot of Painted Post that between the Hornby road and the river, and Hamilton and Steuben streets. The plot has subsequently been enlarged; on the east, by Gen. F. E. Erwin, H. P. Badger and Geo. W. Patterson, and on the west by Charles H. Erwin.

In the month of May, 1833 our valleys were again inundated. This flood was occasioned alone by heavy showers, and only lacked

\* Since writing the above, Wm. C. Bronson has sold his interest in the firm to Mr. A. J. Fox and Maj. Charles J. Fox, and it is now known as Fox, Weston & Co.



12 inches of reaching the height of the "great pumpkin flood." It was much more disastrous. Mills, manufactories, dwellings, bridges, lumber, cattle, sheep and swine were swept away by it. We have a distinct recollection of this flood, for we waded in the night, with our father, over the meadows and to the dam above the mill.

Timothy W. Whiting and his partner, Wm. Boardman, in the effort to secure some lumber that had been rafted, floated past our town on two platforms of lumber that broke loose, without oars. The danger and excitement was great. The water was so high that the grubs touched the Conhocton bridge, and they had barely room by lying flat upon the platforms to pass under it. Under the Knoxville bridge, they were compelled to drop into the water and hold on to the platforms. They were however, rescued below the bridge and before reaching the canal dam, but the lumber was lost.

We distinctly recollect our astonishment at seeing Jacob Balman (a well known hunter, now living in the wilds of Michigan), ride past on three slabs, with only an edging for a "setting-pole," and safely step off on the bank not a dozen feet from the bridge.

#### CENTREVILLE.

About 1834 or 1835 Judge Thomas McBurney laid out his farm, a mile east of this village, into village lots, and claimed the name and location of the original Painted Post. Erecting a post and putting upon it an Indian and Squaw, painted on canvass. The Judge was a man of energy, and for a brief period it was a thriving place and a serious rival to our village.

Philo P. Hubbell then kept the hotel which was the stage house of the Bath, Elmira, Watkins and Pennsylvania routes, and a part of which is now owned and used as a residence by



Jesse Fuller. A. D. Patterson, (better known as "Dunk" Patterson) and now a resident of California, a son of Robert Patterson, or as he was usually called "Daddy Koon," was proprietor of an extensive carriage factory. Fidelis Ferenbaugh, (father of Fidelis, John and Valentine Ferenbaugh, Mrs. D. Orentt, and grand-father of S. H. Ferenbaugh, editor of *The Painted Post Times* of the village), had a large Saddler and Harness shop.

Zatter F. Wilder (father of James Z. Wilder of this village, and Joseph Wilder, of Oregon,) carried on extensive blacksmith shop. John Arnot and H. H. Matthews built a large store and did a large merchantile trade. Chas. Doolittle also built a store and sold goods until his death, when Messrs. Chas. Mills and Chas. Osborne purchased and occupied his store. Henry G. Cotton and Wm. J. Gilbert had a Law Office. Thomas McMullen, had a smith shop. Andrew his brother, and George Young each had a tailor shop, and several other business enterprises were then started in what is now known as Centreville. This was before the discovery that the canal dam was too high or located in the wrong place, or that the ground was too low for the successful growth of a village.

#### CORNING.

Some two years later the thriving village of Corning now the largest and most populous in the county of Steuben, was commenced on the opposite side of the Chemung river, and though its present growth and prosperity are in a great measure due to the fact of the wrong location of this "dam," it, the "dam," has without doubt been a serious draw back upon the growth of that village, inasmuch as it not only forced it upon the wrong side of the river in the first place, but for want of room, crowded it upon an almost inaccessible hill, and thus very much dwarfed its size.







There cannot be a shadow of a doubt, that if this same "dam" had been properly located, the villages of Painted Post, Centreville, Knoxville and Corning would have all stood upon the north side of the Chemung River, and at the present time, have been the most populous and enterprising city of the Southern Tier, if not of Western New York, the commonwealth more than a million dollars "better off," and the Chemung Canal would not have been among the list of canals to be abandoned.

Early in 1826 a written contract was made and signed by Capt. Samuel Erwin, and a gentleman from New York by the name of James S. Carpenter, for the village plot laid out by Capt. Erwin, and half of the farm now owned by L. D. and W. S. Hodgman; Mr. Carpenter having the optional right to ratify or reject said contract by the following December. This "optional right" reserved, we submit, is conclusive evidence that others were to be consulted or that Mr. Carpenter was negotiating for a company, and the rejection proves beyond a reasonable doubt the report in circulation, "that the company had concluded to purchase a plot nearer the head of navigation," and giving as the reason "it would be less expensive to bring the freights from Painted Post to the canal than to make a canal to that village." We have not succeeded in our efforts to find the date of the formation of the Corning company, but we are very much mistaken if in truth it is not cotemporary with the above transactions, and reports.\* The evidence of this contract may be found in a codicil to the last will and testament of Capt. Samuel Erwin made some two weeks previous to his

\* We have not intended to cast any reflections upon the Corning Company, nor upon the commendable enterprise of the citizens of that place. There can be no blame attached to them either for the zeal shown by their prosperity or for the enterprise and growth of this village. If there be any fault, it was made previous to the formation of the Corning company, or the start of either of the villages.



death. The will is now in possession of Gen. F. E. Erwin, one of the executors, and a record in the County Clerk's office at Bath, Steuben Co., New York.

We have published the above facts, to show the falsity of the reports from whatever source "that to a few individuals, land owners of our town, can be attributed the blame of the tardy growth of our village, which has so many natural advantages, and of the refusal of these land owners to sell." We will venture to add, there never has been a baser fabrication than these reports. And finally, upon this subject, *alabama*.\*

The Corning and Blossburg rail road on the east side of the Tioga river was built in 1839 with ribbon and strap iron rails and was the first completed rail road in the Southern Tier Counties.

In 1840 the first church edifice was erected in the village and is now standing, and is occupied the Presbyterian Society. John Kennard and Hiram Craft architects.

About this time the piles were driven for the New York and Erie railroad through the valleys of the Chemung, Tioga and Canisteo, on the original survey, and the railroad bridge built over the Conhocton river at Steuben street. Maj. John Kennard had the contract of driving the piles and laying the superstructure through this town and a portion of the Canisteo valley.

Some few years thereafter the Maj. joined the Baptist church, and became an elder, and of course migratory, and Mr. Craft with his family returned to the east.

#### COOPER'S PLAINS.

About this time, 1841, the late Dr. John Cooper, Jr., built a large residence, sold lots and commenced a small village upon

\* Signification of this Indian word: "Here we rest."



his farm, near the junction of Mead's Creek valley with the Conhocton, and the western boundry of the town.

It was (we are informed), at the old water saw mill built by John Williams some years before that Col. Uri Balcom, now a resident of Chicago, Ill., commenced his lumber and also mercantile experience, though the late Albert Mulligan opened the first store there. Mr. Anson Buck, father of Edward Buck, Esq., now of Addison, built and kept the first hotel. This house for many years after Mr. Buck left it, was occupied the late Daniel Ogden whose reputation as a prince of landlords nearly absorbed the name of the village, and in fact, it was more frequently said "going to Ogden's," than to "Cooper's Plains." This building was burned in 1871 and has not yet been replaced.

Like a majority of the villages in the Southern Tier Counties in those days, this was laid out and built up in the river valley and as invariably, at or near the mouth of or junction with some valley dividing the hills or mountains like those that bound the Conhocton on either side for more than forty miles.

The Rochester branch of the Erie railway passes through and has a station at Cooper's Plains. There is a Baptist and a Methodist church, a large and commodious district school house, a flouring mill, steam saw mill, chair factories, wagon and smith shops, one or two stores, a Post-office, and some twenty-five or thirty dwellings and the Good Templars (Temperance organization) maintain a flourishing lodge in the village.

#### THE FIRST NEWSPAPER PRINTED IN THE VILLAGE.

The *Painted Post Gazette*, Mr. Fairchild, editor, was started in 1846. It continued but a few months. There is a file of them in town, we think.

In the autumn of this year, a lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows was instituted in the village: and a year or two later, a Division of the Sons of Temperance. These two orders



flourished for ten or twelve years; both perhaps suffering through their inability to keep their treasuries in a condition to satisfy the demands of *charities* promised their members.

In 1847 the Bank of Cayuga Lake, in and owned by H. J. Grant, of Ithaca, was purchased by Asa S. Foster, of New York city and Cephas F. Platt, of this village. In the spring of 1851 they removed it to Painted Post, with a capital of \$50,000. It was for several years kept in the second story of the Empire Block. In 1860 Mr. Platt became sole proprietor, at which time its issue was over \$70,000, and he occupied for some years the brick building he had erected for a Bank.

In 1848 the late A. H. Erwin, Gen. F. E. Erwin, I. P. Bennett and the late Henry S. Brooks, erected an extensive Foundry and Machine Shop, with a block of three large stores, and the largest public hall in the county, over the stores, known as Mechanic's Hall. (See plate on opposite page.) It was completed in 1849. Some two years thereafter, the company purchased Mr. Bennett's interest, and was known as Erwin & Brooks. In 1853 or 1854 Mr. David Curtis purchased Gen. Erwin's interest, and the title of the firm, was Curtis, Erwin & Brooks. In 1855 Mr. Curtis gave one half of his interest to his daughter, Mrs. Charles H. Erwin.

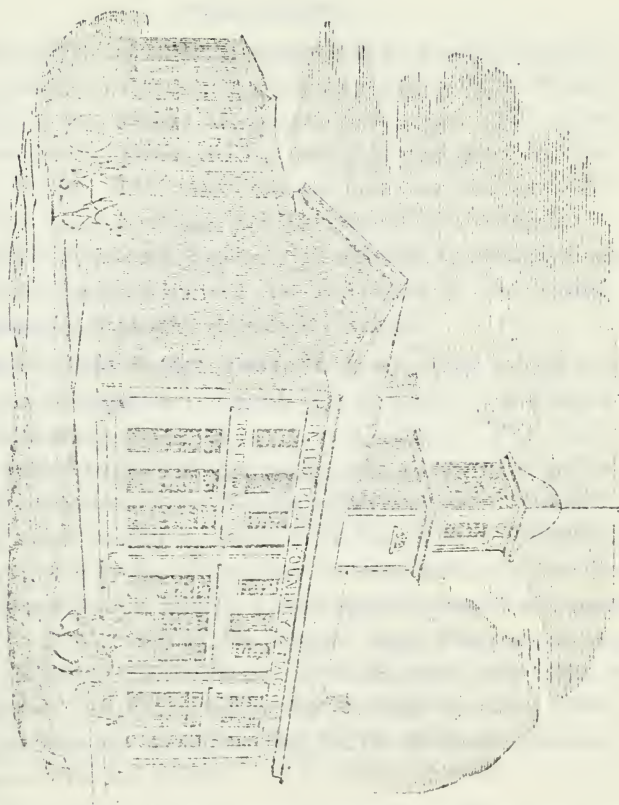
The next year Mr. Brooks sold one half of his interest to the late Judge Washington Barnes. Under the superintendence of the late James H. Simmons, of Fairport N. Y., and until the financial pressure of 1857, it was unsurpassed by any establishment of the kind in western New York. It employed nearly one hundred men.

In the month of May 1848 Messrs Ransom Bennett and B. M. Hawley, commenced the publication of the second newspaper in the village; the *Painted Post Herald*, which survived





View of the original Foundry Buildings with Mechanics Hall.





about one year, the old type utterly refusing to make it longer legible or intelligible. The type was subsequently used to promulgate the beauties and efficacies of Doctor Hawley's patent medicines.

#### SCHOOL HOUSES.

The first school house in the village that we recollect, was situated on the site of the dwelling now occupied by E. S. Borland, and which is also Messrs. Hodgman's farm-house. This school house was built of plank, and the rent of ground given by Capt. Samuel Erwin. The next one was built, on the south side of the river and is now used as a dwelling by Mrs. Hallack.

We would be pleased if space were allowed, to mention some of the earlier associations, and give the names of the teachers and ministers that taught in those old houses.

In 1848 or 1849 the late Arthur H. Erwin built a large two story frame building, on the south side of the river and nearly opposite the residence of the late C. J. Chatfield. This building was rented to the district together with two acres of ground for \$100 per annum, to be used for a district school. The main building was some fifty by seventy-five feet with a projecting gable supported by four large pillars in front, and a wing on the south and north sides, making a front upon the street of about 100 feet.\* It was used by the district until 1868, when the present model brick school house on Charles street was built, at an expense of \$14,000, including the lot and furniture. Wm. C. Bronson was the contractor, Maj. M. H. McGrath architect, and Ames J. Bauter, joiner.

In 1850 the M. E. Church society erected an edifice upon the corner of Chemung and Steuben streets. Maj. M. H. McGrath architect.

\* This building, then in use for a tobacco house, was burned in the fall of 1871.



On the evening of September 2d of the same year, a Lodge of F. & A. Masons was instituted in the village. Maj. M. H. McGrath was the first W. M., and the order is now in a flourishing condition.

In 1852 a company was formed under the title of the Corning, Painted Post, Cooper's Plains and Monterey Plank Road Co., and a single track was laid from the village of Monterey (now in Schuyler county), through Mead's Creek valley to Cooper's Plains and from thence to the bridge over the Chemung river at Corning; about fifteen miles, with four toll gates.

Some six years after, the company abandoned the plank road between Cooper's Plains and Monterey, and several years thereafter by special Legislative enactment resolved itself into the Conhocton Stone Road Company, since which time we have, at intervals somewhat frequent, a "*Jordan*" road from the Corning bridge through our village to Cooper's Plains. Our oldest citizens inform us that in their candid opinion, it is a *new* improvement upon the poor roads of sixty years ago.

It is perhaps the best illustration of the great benefits to be derived from boobyism or "special legislation" in western New York.

However, it is believed by many who are compelled to use it, that it is not improved by being twice crossed within one mile by the double tracked Erie, and there are many who think the greatest improvement that can be made upon it, or rather will be, will be the expiration of its thirty years charter. At its very poorest condition only, does it become a common free highway.

In 1852 the Baptist organized a church association, and for three years after held meetings in the Empire Hall, then occupied Mechanics Hall until it burned in 1860, and then built the Tabernacle.



Empire Hall was a large public hall, in the third story of the Empire Block which was built by A. B. McCuller, now a resident of Corning, for Messrs. A. H. and Gen. F. E. Erwin in 1841, and stood upon the south east corner of Water and Hamilton streets. In the autumn of 1850, the New York and Erie rail road was completed between Corning and Hornellsville, passing through the village. In 1852, the Buffalo, Conhocton Valley and New York rail road forming a junction in this village with the Erie, (as it is now called). In 1855 the Union Telegraph Company completed a line along the E. R. R. and through the village; and in 1857 another telegraph line was made along the B. C. V. and N. Y. R. R. This rapid mode of public traveling was a greater advance upon the stage coach of 1825, than that was upon the pedestrian and foot line of the first settlers of these valleys.

In 1852 we were nearer the great commercial emporium, New York, than they were to their grist mill. Now a person can go from N. Y., to the Pacific Ocean and return in less time than our fathers could go to New York and return, and now we can ask favors and questions from persons on the Pacific coast and receive an answer about as soon as many of them could get their mails from the Post-office.

There can be no doubt that the most remarkable inventions and discoveries that have been known or made in the world, have been made during the period of time that our little history occupies. Human intelligence and skill to-day, appear a giant, beside anything we can find this side of the Egyptian Pyramids.

In 1856 Messrs. Harvey Bissel and William D. Farwell (at this time one of the gigantic mercantile firm in Chicago, John V. Farwell & Co., and living in New York City), purchased the Van Orman tannery on Chemung street and established, and for





several years did a successful business under the immediate superintendence, of our estimable citizen, Mr. Benjamin Farwell. In 1859 Mr. Farwell sold his interest to Mr. Bissel,\* and about 1864 Mr. Bissel sold to Messrs. Cyrus Pyle & Co. N. Spencer Thomas, one of the last named firm, (now a resident of Elmira), successfully completed the new method of manufacturing the extract of hemlock bark in this establishment, and is the patentee and owner of the process, as well as of numerous machines required by it.

This Extract is an article of great importance to tanners and dyers, and much used in various manufactories, as it condenses uninjured, all the properties of the bark for such purposes into less bulk, and makes it convenient for shipping to all parts of the country.

The Extract Works of this village employ some twenty men; has an extensive barrel factory attached, and runs day and night. Its capacity is from 2000 to 3500 cords of hemlock bark, and about 400 cords of barrel material per annum. It is under the efficient management of Mr. Charles Fredell, and the products are shipped to all parts of this continent and to Europe, direct from these works.

In January 1857, from a severe shower and the rail road obstructions, the north part of the village was deluged, and from dusk until midnight there was a scene of consternation and confusion only equalled by the desolation apparent in the morning.

\* To this gentleman, the late Harvey Bissel, of Toledo, Ohio, the village owes much. He was for many years a resident, and engaged in various business operations in this vicinity. He was one of those indefatigably industrious persons that could not live without doing for himself or others, and to his kindness the village is indebted for the beautiful and pleasant shade trees on the streets planted with his own hands.



There is perhaps, nothing that will compare with little creeks when once they commence their freaks of getting high; they are more obstinate, perverse, independent, willful and vicious than a —— cab driver. This flood was caused from two Hornby creeks that reach the valley a little west of the village. Scarce had our village recovered from the Hornby creeks disaster, when all the valleys were again surprised with the greatest inundation ever known. We quote the description furnished us in 1860:

"On the 10th day of November, 1857 the waters of the Chemung river and its tributaries were higher than at any time before of which we have a record. About mid day on the 9th, the clouds gathered, presently the rain commenced falling, and it continued in torrents until in the night. It seemed as if the flood gates of heaven were opened and we were to share the fate of the unrighteous of Noah's time.

All night men went to and fro, each carrying a lantern. The scene reminded one of the Dismal Swamp Lake with its fire-fly lamps multiplied, and making the darkness hideous with their hoarse voices and flitting lights. The next morning was fearfully exciting, the waters were pouring into the low places and many of the houses. Men, women and children were busy in removing their effects to higher ground. In the confusion the cars on the B. C. V. & N. Y. came whistling past, but before they had gone a mile the flood admonished them to stop, to back out; too late, they could not return beyond the village, and their living freight was poured out upon our little town, and received into the houses that were not submerged.

Steadily and rapidly the waters accumulated and increased until the waves dashed against the planks of the bridges, and bravely they resisted the crash of trees, logs, lumber, stumps, furniture and flood-trash, corn, pumpkins and produce that were hurled against them. At 3 p. m. the waters were observed to be



at a stand; two hours later they were falling visibly, and the people felt that they were not to be swept away this time. The next morning presented a scene of confusion and desolation that baffles description."

We are unable to convey a just conception of the misery entailed upon our village by this flood. We could stand on our walk and dip water from the Conhocton river. Boats landed at the door of the Hotel, and it was a perfect sea of water from our walk to mountains on the west of the Tioga river, or where the river should be.

About 8 o'clock A. M., on the morning of the 7th of May, 1860, a fire was discovered in the Foundry owned then by Messrs. Curtis, Erwin, Brooks & Co. It spread rapidly and consumed the foundry block and buildings, and barn of the company, barns, livery stable, and market of the hotel; 5 dwellings, and 5 more barns on the north side of Water street, and 4 stores, a wagon and one smith shop on the south side.

It was estimated that more than \$50,000 worth of property above insurance was destroyed. Corning assisted us in putting out the fire, notwithstanding the collision of cars, whereby some twenty persons were more or less injured.

The village was incorporated under the "general incorporation act," July 18th, 1860, holding its first election August 14th following at the then Lovel House. The same year Messrs. A. Weston, Wm. C. Bronson, Chas. H. Erwin and Wm. H. Calkins rebuilt the Foundry, Machine, Smith and Boiler shops, to which they have added at various times since, and in 1865 with the addition of Maj. M. H. McGrath to the company, erected the extensive Door, Sash and Blind Factory which flourished a few years, and was then abandoned.

During this season, (1860), Wm. C. Bronson, one of the most



enterprising and wealthy citizens of the village, purchased the lots on the north west corner of Water and Hamilton streets, and had erected thereon a large three story brick block, containing two of the finest stores, the largest public hall and the most elegant Masonic hall, at that time, in the county, together with six large and convenient offices. (In 1869 Mr. B. enlarged this building, by the addition of D. Orcutt's drug store and H. D. Edwards' jewelry store).

In 1860 the Baptists erected and finished a frame church on Water street, which was said at the time to be the finest church edifice in the county. Maj. Michael H. McGrath, who in his profession is among the first in western New York, was the architect of these last two buildings and of many of the most elegant and imposing buildings in this and adjoining counties of the State.

In 1861 the town and village were among the first to furnish soldiers to put down the memorable Southern secession and rebellion. Capt. William W. Erwin, (now a resident of St. Paul, Minn.) was the first to raise a company of volunteers. Lt. Col. Wm. F. Fox, (now of Oil City,) and his brother, Maj. Charles J. Fox, (present Supervisor), together raised a company; and Maj. M. H. McGrath led another company into the field. Lieuts. Thomas W. Cooper, Frederick Cooper, Theodore Cooper, (the last in the Navy), Surgeon Dr. John Cooper, Lieuts. C. J. Chatfield and Irving Bronson; D. W. C. Erwin, R. B. Rose, Nelson Phelps, Ira A. Borst, Edgar and Augustus H. Wood, Sanford D. Brown, Henry Gilbert, Wilson Bennett, Albert S. Ward, Thomas Horner, and some two hundred other officers and privates represented our town and village. They were too many for us to mention all their names in this sketch, but their valorous deeds, their names or history, cannot suffer by omission from the pages of this little book. They need no chronicler; for







they will live in the memory and gratitude of every true patriot forever. The town not only paid for its own, but for a proportion of the county recruits.

In March 1865 our vicinity was again deluged, and by the highest water ever known in these valleys. A vast amount of property was destroyed or ruined.

In 1870 Wm. C. Bronson and Harris C. Higman opened a Bank in the store now occupied by H. D. Edwards as a jewelry store, in the Bronson Block. In 1872 these gentlemen purchased the Bank of Cayuga Lake; and Mr. Bronson the building of C. F. Platt. Mr. Bronson immediately commenced the enlargement and rebuilding of the old bank, adding an iron and plate glass front and another story; re-arranging and elaborately finishing the office and parlor. In January 1873 Mr. Bronson purchased Mr. Higman's interest and became sole proprietor.

In October 1870, Messrs. W. C. Bronson, H. C. Higman and S. H. Ferebaugh commenced the publication of *The Painted Post Times*, Mr. H. retiring in 1872.

In the autumn of 1872 Mr. Bronson had built on his lot in front of the Erie depot, an iron roofed, fire proof, Planing Mill, and in the spring of 1873 opened, with Messrs. Geo. Dorn and Alvah Bronson, an extensive lumber yard. This mill has a capacity of 50,000 feet of dressed lumber per day.

In 1870 the double track of the Erie railroad was finished to a point four miles south of the village or at the eastern terminus of the Canisteo valley.

In the spring of 1873 a depot was built near E. E. Townsend's west line, and the station called Erwin, and a new Post-office and Edward E. Townsend appointed Postmaster. There are now three Post-offices in the town of Erwin. Painted Post, in the village; Cooper's Plains, at Cooper's Plains; and Erwin, at Erwin.



At or near this place the Tioga and Canisteo rivers join. Here the main roads branch and for many years this location, was better known as Rook's or the "Log Tavern." Capt. Samuel Erwin, now residing near Calvert, Texas, pulled down the old log house, (about 1842, we think), and had built the hotel before mentioned as the Erwin House. It was then called the Erwin Hotel. Then as now, public houses were generally known by the name of the landlord, and it is now more frequently spoken of as Edminster's.

April 29th 1872 the hotel built by Francis Erwin in 1822, was burned, having stood nearly a half a century.

On the evening of the 28th day of February, 1873, one of the very severest cold evenings of the winter, thermometer indicating 9° below zero, our village was scourged with another and the greatest conflagration. All the buildings between Hamilton street and the Erie railway crossing, on the south side of Water street, including the Empire Block, were burned. Nearly all the buildings, except the Empire Block, have already been replaced with better buildings.

We present a few statistics, which will indicate the improvement in town, from our Post-office for corresponding quarters of 1860 and the year 1873.

Received at this office.	Quarters ending June 30th.	
	1860	1873
Daily Papers,	15	38
Tri-weekly,	0	1
Semi-weekly,	5	11
Outside of County, weeklies	175	239
County weeklies,	75	303
Monthly Magazines,	40	96
Semi-monthly Magazines,	97	33
Letters sent,	about 7,000	11,124



The foregoing table does not include papers taken at the news room, and in 1860 we had no news room in town.

There are some sixty buildings occupied and used for the various kinds of business; between 180 and 185 dwellings, and from 193 to 198 families in the village, and more than 300 school children in the district. As regards the intelligence, good morals and industry of the inhabitants, they justly claim an equality with any village of the size in this or any other State.

The space left will not permit of more than a general description of the town lands and their present condition. They are divided into valleys and hills, three-fifths of which perhaps, belong to the latter division. Nearly the whole of them in the valleys of the Conhocton, Tioga and Canisteo are improved. The soil is a deposit of rich alluvium, well adapted to the growth of cereals, roots, and most of the choice fruits, and many of the farms are now carefully and scientifically cultivated. The hills where the sides are not too precipitous, (rarely the case, though some of them reach an altitude of nearly 600 feet above the rivers), are all tillable, and their soils of loam and clay often producing good crops of cereals, excepting corn and buckwheat, are much better adapted to grazing and good fruit.

Since 1855 tobacco has been successfully grown in the valleys, and nearly a hundred acres are annually planted in the town. Calvin Lovell, Esq., residing on his farm near the Gang Mills, is the pioneer of this lucrative production in the town.

With not a few of the farmers, stock raising and wool growing have become a profitable business.

Of the hill lands, but a small proportion have yet been put under cultivation. The lumber business has been reduced



principally to hemlock. It is safe perhaps, to estimate the good pine now standing upon the entire area of the town, as less than sufficient to full-stock the Gang Mills one year.

There is however, sufficient in the adjoining towns and in the northern part of Pennsylvania, to keep our manufacturers busy for sometime.

In fact, this vicinity is rapidly losing its wide-spread and distinguished reputation as a "lumber region"; and cultivation not unfrequently peeps from the summits of the highest hills down upon the older meadows and grain fields of the valleys, and these are occasionally creeping up the hill sides and meeting on the tops of the mountains the later improvements.—1789 shaking hands with 1874.

#### BEGINNING OF THE END.

Events rapidly increase as we approach the end, and we have already passed the boundary staked for us at the commencement. There were many personal exploits and anecdotes of the early settlers, and many names, incidents and statistics of the near past, that we intended to have given and which would have added to the interest of this book, but we were compelled by limit to omit them.

Every person that has lived in town, has had more or less to do with the shaping of these events, but even if it were possible to do it, it would take many long years to record the individual shares. We have not manufactured any of the events, facts or traditions; have not drawn upon our own imagination, or that of others for conclusions, nor colored the pictures, but given to our readers as we received them, the simple narrations and quotations of our informants.

We have been unable to present more reliable testimony than that of eye-witnesses and their statements in their own hand writing; from deeds, contracts, wills and business







papers, and from official and legal documents. We have endeavored to collect and record a truthful and impartial history of the most important and interesting events that have transpired in town, and in the plainest manner without effort or time to study the best style to please, and while laboring to interest the reader with facts, have been unmindful of the critic and croaker.

We freely acknowledge that we do not consider it exempt from errors of composition and style, and only claiming for it a plain and comprehensive statement of facts, which we were unwilling should pass into oblivion. The future historian will find that the essential facts herein contained are every day becoming more difficult to reach. Few and scattered are now the eye-witnesses, and with those who are left, the memories of old events are fast becoming clouded with the dust of age, and physical infirmities.

The links that have bound the past to the present have already become too rare, and the few that remain are getting too rusty and brittle to last are dropping out one by one, and must soon disappear.\* The little incidents, ambitions, trials, successes and defeats of the past, that embellish and make readable the history of the present, are being rapidly hidden under the pressure of passing events, and the traditions and facts of "ye olden time" of this locality, must soon be manufactured. For all omissions we crave the indulgence of our readers, after rendering our only excuse: our promised assistance and space, not being commensurate with our disposition to supply them.

In conclusion we would remark, that if in the perusal of these truthful narrations of facts and this brief history of the town, our

\* Since the commencement of writing this book, we are compelled to record four of these "broken links," Mrs. Betsy Calkins, Mr. John Arner, of Elmira, the Hon. Wm. S. Hubbard, of Bath, and Robt. Patterson, have died.



readers can find an hour's enjoyment, or a more generous or just appreciation of the many trials and severe toil of the early settlers of our new and beautiful homes; we, with your approbation, and our brief but pleasant excursion among the memories and with the actors of that "far past," shall have received full remuneration for our time. We have no promise or expectation of other reward. We have conscientiously and with great care fulfilled our promise in the introduction, and after adding a brief account of the supposed lead mine in this vicinity, without farther apology and with all its imperfections, we submit it, "*alabama.*"

#### THE LEADEN LEGEND.

There has been since our first recollection, a belief among the people of our valleys that there is in or near our vicinity a large deposit of Galena or lead ore. Many of the old settlers were firm in this belief, and many of a later day have been so confident of this legendary idea, that they have scarred the face of hills and valleys with pits and wells, searching for it, and not a few are still left who are yet sanguine the discovery of a lead mine (some of the more deluded ones expect silver) will be made. This legend about the "lead mine" is based upon the circumstance that a few years subsequent to the first settlements of these valleys, "a small party of Indians started from Bloody Run, Big Flats, Elmira or some other place, ostensibly for a hunt: returned to, or were seen at Bloody Run with an abundant supply of *new bar lead*. They came from the direction of Painted Post, and gave strong evidence of having waded the river, for they were wet."

These, with the antiquity, and great desire that such great good fortune should eventually befall the inhabitants of these otherwise rich valleys, are the only facts, the vertebra upon which this leaden legend was created, and we think it is



apparently a very weak back bone for such a wonderful structure of credulity as has grown upon it. But you are entitled to our reasons for this breach of faith in this renowned and venerable tradition, that has been handed down to us from "no-one-knows how-long-ago," or from "no-one knows who." First, so far as we are enabled to understand Prof. Taylor and other State officials, they fail to put any credence in it, and the science of Geology and Mineralogy deny the possibility of its truth. Secondly, the fact that the unknown traditions saith, "bar lead," instead of lead ore. We have yet to learn of a lead mine, having been discovered where the ore is found smelted into bars. And lastly upon Apple Island, nearly opposite Messrs. Fox, Weston & Bronson's Gang Mills, many years subsequent to the said "supply of new bar lead in possession of the wet Indians" there was discovered buried several feet below one of the apple trees (that gave the name to the island) iron and brass kettles, forks, implements and household furniture, with bar lead and other traps not usually found in possession of wild Indians; which in the opinion of some of the old settlers, as well as of some who are yet living who recollect the finding of these things, belonged to a colony of Germans who were passing through these valleys previous to the first settlement, were killed by the Indians, and their effects buried under the apple tree.

And now you are prepared to judge for yourselves of the probabilities of the discovery of a lead mine in our valleys. You have all the facts upon which the legend was erected, and the authorities, which appear to be equally responsible.



# A LIST OF THE POST OFFICES, NEWSPAPERS, AND RAILROADS IN STEUBEN COUNTY, Jan. 1, 1874.

## POST OFFICES :

Addison, Addison Hill, Adrian, Allen's Station, Arkport, Avoca; Bath, Bennett's Creek, Big Creek, Blood's Depot, Bradford, Buena Vista; Cameron, Cameron Mills, *Campbelltown*, Canisteo, Canisteo Centre, *Caton*, Cohocton, *Cooper's Plains*, *Corning*; Doty's Corners; East Troupsburgh, East Woodhull, *Erwin*, *Erwin Centre*; *Gibson*, Goff's Mills, Greenwood, Hammondsport, Haskinsville, Hedgesville, *Hornby*, Hornellsville, Howard; Jasper; Kanona; *Lindleytown*; Mitchellville; North Cohocton, North Jasper; *Painted Post*, Perkinsville, Prattsburgh, Purdy Creek; Rathboneville, Rexville, Risingville, Riker's Hollow; Savona, Sonora, South Addison, South Bradford, South Cameron, South Dansville, South Howard, South Pulney, South Troupsburgh, Stevens Mills, Swale; Towlesville, Troupsburgh; Wayland Depot, Wayne, Wayne Four Corners, Wileysville, Woodhull, and Young Hickory.

Those in *italics* are within the territory of the original town of Painted Post.

In 1796 Steuben County had six towns and three post-offices; in 1874 it has thirty-two towns and seventy-one post-offices; over 100 miles of railroad completed, and nearly half as much more partly finished; and over 125 miles of telegraph.

## NEWSPAPERS.

There are twelve newspapers now published in Steuben Co., as follows:

*Advocate*, Bath, [Dem.] by A. L. Underhill; *Courier*, Bath, [Rep.] Hull & Barnes; *Journal*, Corning, [Rep.] Pratt & DeWalt; *Democrat*, Corning, [Dem.] F. B. Brown; *Advertiser*, Addison, [Ind.] G. H. Ellis; *Tribune*, Hornellsville, [Dem.] Greenlow & Son; *Times*, Hornellsville, [Rep.] Thatcher & Tuttle; *Times*, Painted Post, [Rep.] S. H. Ferenbaugh; *News*, Prattsburgh, [Ind.] P. C. Howe; *Herald*, Hornellsville, [Ind.] Graham & Dawson; *Tribune*, Cohocton; *Times*, Blood.



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